

# **PAUL HINDEMITH'S SONATAS FOR VIOLA AND PIANO**

by

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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## **SUMMARY**

This dissertation is an account of Paul Hindemith's life between 1919 and 1939 with special reference to his compositional development through the three sonatas for viola and piano.

The introduction to the dissertation initially provides a list of Hindemith's vast output for the viola followed by insight into the reason and need for undertaking this research, literary sources used and their function in the context of this study and the conclusion that there is a lack of extant research on the three sonatas for viola and piano. This is followed by comments on Hindemith as a viola player and composer, supported by opinions of scholars and performers. An overview of the contents and aim of the dissertation completes the introduction.

This first of the two comprehensive chapters briefly discusses Hindemith's character traits as viewed by a number of scholars and continues by introducing the political, social and financial circumstances in Germany in 1919. The chapter progresses into a division of the period 1919-1939 into six sub-sections of dates within this time span. Each section focuses on the political, financial and musical circumstances in Hindemith's life, with special attention given to the periods of greatest change and conflict. Included in this chapter are also the specific circumstances surrounding the composition, first performances and publication of the three sonatas for viola and piano, alongside mention of other works written at the same time. This is supported by references and quotations from correspondence between Hindemith and his wife, colleagues and friends, as well as translations of newspaper articles, letters and articles which thus far have not been translated into English. Special attention is given to possible reasons for the late publication of op.25 no.4 in 1977.

Chapter 2 looks deeper into the significance, success and development of Hindemith through these three works. His stylistic development beginning with the influences of Debussy and Reger, his identification with the 'Neue Sachlichkeit' until the beginning of his later conservatism can be seen clearly in these three works.

The aim of the study is to assimilate the available information into an accurate and coherent picture of the composer's life and stylistic development between 1919 and 1939 in a way that has not been presented before. It is my intention through this work that the unique style of the sonatas as well as their important place in the viola repertoire is apparent, and consequently of interest to other viola players, hopefully encouraging them to play the works themselves.



## **OPSOMMING**

In hierdie tesis word Paul Hindemith se lewe tussen 1919 en 1939 beskryf, met spesiale verwysing na sy ontwikkeling as komponis soos dit waargeneem kan word in die drie sonates vir altviool en klavier.

Die inleiding tot die tesis verskaf 'n lys van Hindemith se omvangryke oeuvre vir die altviool, gevolg deur 'n motivering waarom hierdie studie onderneem word. Die omvattende literatuurstudie dui daarop dat daar tot op datum baie min navorsing oor die drie altvioolsonates gedoen is. Vervolgens word kommentaar gelewer op Hindemith as altviolis en komponis, ondersteun deur opinies van uitvoerende kunstenaars en musikoloë. 'n Oorsig oor die inhoud en die doelstellings van die tesis sluit die inleiding af.

Die eerste van die twee omvattende hoofstukke begin met 'n bespreking van Hindemith se karakter, gevolg deur 'n oorsig oor die politieke, sosiale en ekonomiese omstandighede in Duitsland rondom 1919. Die tydperk 1919-1939 word dan in ses onderafdelings verdeel. Elke onderafdeling plaas die fokus op spesifieke politieke, finansiële en musikale omstandighede in Hindemith se lewe. Die jare waarin konflik en verandering op besondere wyse na vore tree word meer omvattend bespreek. Teen die agtergrond van ander werke uit hierdie tyd word die spesifieke omstandighede rondom die komposisie, eerste uitvoering en publikasie van die drie altvioolsonates in detail beskryf. Dit word aangevul deur verwysings na en aanhalings uit korrespondensie tussen Hindemith en sy vrou, kollegas en vriende, sowel as deur vertalings van koerantartikels en briewe wat tot dusver nog nie in Engels beskikbaar was nie.

Hoofstuk 2 plaas die klem op Hindemith se stilistiese ontwikkeling, soos dit in die drie sonates waargeneem word. Die sonates illustreer Hindemith se ontwikkeling vanaf sy bewondering vir Debussy en Reger, oor sy vereenselwiging met die ideale van die 'Neue Sachlichkeit' tot by die meer konservatiewe benadering wat hy later gevolg het. Hierdeur word gepoog om die unieke waarde van die sonates, asook die belangrike plek wat hulle in die algemene altvioolrepertorium beklee, te beskryf. Hopelik sal die studie die belangstelling van altvioliste wek en hulle aanmoedig om die werke ook self te speel.

Die doel van die studie is dus om die beskikbare inligting tot 'n samehangende en akkurate beeld van die komponis se lewe en stilistiese ontwikkeling tussen 1919 en 1939 te voeg op 'n wyse wat nog nie voorheen gedoen is nie. Hierdeur word gepoog om die unieke waarde van die sonates asook die belangrike plek wat hulle in die algemene altvioolrepertorium beklee, te beskryf. Hopelik sal die studie die belangstelling van altvioliste wek en hulle aanmoedig om die werke ook self te speel.

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## INTRODUCTION

Although Paul Hindemith began his musical career as a violinist, and though he was proficient on most other orchestral instruments, it is as a viola player that he developed into an internationally acclaimed virtuoso. It is not surprising then, that, as a composer, Hindemith contributed several significant works to the repertoire of this frequently neglected solo instrument. These include:

| WORK  | OPUS NUMBER | DATE OF COMPOSITION        |
|---|-------------|----------------------------|
| Sonata for viola and piano  | op.11 no.4  | 27 February - 9 March 1919 |
| Sonata for solo viola   | op.11 no.5  | Completed 21 July 1919     |
| Sonata for solo viola   | op.25 no.1  | March 1922                 |
| Sonata for viola and piano  | op.25 no.4  | June – 15 November 1922    |
| Sonata for solo viola   | op.31 no.4  | Completed 23 August 1923   |
| <i>Kammermusik</i> for solo viola and large chamber orchestra               | op.36 no.4  | Completed in Spring 1927   |
| Trio for viola, heckelphone and piano                                       | op.47       | Completed in March 1928    |
| Concert Music for viola and large chamber orchestra                         | op.48       | Completed early 1930       |
| Duet for viola and cello  |             | 23 January 1934            |
| Concerto for viola and reduced orchestra<br><i>Der Schwanendreher</i>       |             | September – October 1935   |
| <i>Trauermusik</i> for solo viola (or violin or cello) and string orchestra |             | 21 January 1936            |
| Sonata for solo viola   |             | 20-21 April 1937           |
| Meditation for violin, viola or cello and piano                             |             | 1938                       |
| Sonata for viola and piano  |             | July 1938 – 13 April 1939  |

One would expect Hindemith to approach these viola compositions not only with an intimate knowledge of the technical possibilities of the instrument but also with a high level of inspiration. Comparison with the numerous sonatas for other orchestral instruments will affirm that this is indeed the case. Despite the speed at which they were written, none of the viola works show signs of having just been churned out, as the malicious description of Hindemith as the ‘Telemann of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’ –

levelled against him by jealous (and less talented) opponents – would seem to suggest in respect of some of the other sonatas. Given that these works probably represent Hindemith at his most profound, it is surprising that no extensive research has been conducted on them thus far. An investigation into the three sonatas for viola and piano seems to be an appropriate starting point to rectify this situation.

Against this background, a brief overview of research into related topics would have to include the following: David Neumeyer looked at all Hindemith's duo sonatas for orchestral instruments and piano in a superficial manner in his book *The Music of Paul Hindemith* (1986). He discusses Hindemith's style periods, the placement of each of the sonatas within these periods, their form and basic tonal structure along with some comparison between the works. Geoffrey Skelton wrote a detailed biography of Hindemith's life and works: *Paul Hindemith: The Man behind the Music* (1975), and also published a compilation of the composer's letters: *Selected Letters of Paul Hindemith* (1995). The first book discusses Hindemith's compositions alongside other aspects of his life at the time each work was written and the second is a selection of letters written by Hindemith, his publisher and various other people involved in important musical events in his life. Giseler Schubert, director of the Paul Hindemith Institute in Frankfurt provided an up to date overview in his article, *Paul Hindemith* in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001) which is the most update account of Hindemith's life, style and works. He also compiled a book of letters from Hindemith to his wife *Das Private Logbuch: Briefe an seine Frau Gertrud* (1995). There is nothing relevant or detailed pertaining to the style, structure or importance of the viola sonatas in the book, but it does contain Hindemith's own mention of performances and compositional details. In his doctoral dissertation titled



*The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik: Musical Aesthetics in the Weimar Republic with Reference to the Works of Paul Hindemith* (1989) Stephen Hinton discusses the development of Hindemith's style pertaining to specific works from 1919-1933. Op.11 no.4 and op.25 no.4 are mentioned in some detail.

In his book titled *Hindemith* (1970) Ian Kemp gives an excellent account of Hindemith's stylistic development as well as mentioning specific compositions, but again only very brief mention is made of the viola sonatas. Hans Kohlhasse discusses *Kammermusik* op.48 for viola and large chamber orchestra (1930) in his article in *The Viola: Yearbook of the International Viola Society*, comparing it to J.S Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no.6 BWV 1051. He also wrote an article *Paul Hindemiths Bratschenkonzert "Der Schwanendreher"* (1990), discussing the circumstances of the composition of the work, its folk origins and specific details of Hindemith's style. In his book *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (1999), Arnold Whittall mentions a number of the instrumental sonatas, but not specifically any of the solo viola or viola and piano sonatas. He discusses the development of Hindemith's style and expresses strong opinions on the influence of the political situation on the composer's style. These are the main literary sources containing information pertaining to Hindemith's instrumental sonatas.

Hindemith's own *The Craft of Musical Composition Volume I* (1937) is extremely informative and enlightening concerning his method of composition, analysis of his own works and how he reached his conclusions about melody, harmony and rhythm. Because of the time when this book was written, it is more relevant to the style and

analysis of the sonata for viola and piano written in 1939, although the other sonatas can also be analysed and studied according to the principles therein.

Most of the other literature focuses on Hindemith's role in German music during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. The main sources for these periods are Michael Kater's two books *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (1997) and *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (2000), Erik Levi's *Music in the Third Reich* (1994), Michael Meyer's *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (1993), Sam Shirakawa's *The Devil's Music Master: The Controversial life and career of Wilhelm Furtwängler* (1992) and Michael Laffan's *The Burden of German History: 1919-1945* (1988).

This overview confirms once more the aforementioned lack of extant research on the viola sonatas. The information available is scant and written superficially, focusing mainly on the obvious and general characteristics of the sonatas. For example, David Neumeier's comments on the op.11 no.4 sonata in *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, pages 115-6, are written in the form of programme notes.

The most detailed sources concerning Hindemith's character appear in Siglind Bruhn's *The Temptation of Paul Hindemith: Mathis der Maler as a Spiritual Testimony* (1998) and in Geoffrey Skelton's *Paul Hindemith: The Man behind the Music* (1975).

Articles from the *Hindemith-Jahrbuch* have also provided additional and more personal touches to some of the information I have included, particularly in Chapter 1.



The two volumes, *Streichkammermusik* II (V,5) from 1993, edited by Hermann Danuser and III (V,6) from 1976 edited by Peter Cahn, published by Schott have provided the most accurate details concerning the origins of sketches, first performances and dedications. These are the closest to actually seeing the sketches and autographs housed in the Paul Hindemith Institute in Frankfurt. I did not have access to these sources.

It is significant that Hindemith changed from earning a living by playing the violin to composing in 1919, and that at the same time he made the decision to play the viola instead of the violin. These two decisions were important because they changed the direction of his career. Even more important was the fact that shortly after making these two changes he decided that he needed recital repertoire for his newly chosen instrument. This resulted in the composition of the **first sonata for viola and piano op.11 no.4** from February-March 1919. It was one of Hindemith's first works to be published, along with the other op.11 sonatas and the string quartet op.10 no.1. The sonata was published in 1922 by B.Schott's Söhne in Mainz. A sonata for solo viola was also part of the op.11 set of works: op.11 no.5, completed on 21 July 1919 and first published by Schott in 1923. Op.11 no.4 is representative of Hindemith's early experimental style and shows the influence of Debussy, Brahms, Reger and to a lesser degree Strauss.

Tully Potter writes of the op.11 no.4 sonata for viola and piano:

On his return in 1919, [Hindemith] became leader of the orchestra but switched to viola in the Rebner Quartet. He promptly set about providing himself with recital repertoire, writing two contrasting sonatas: that for viola and piano, op.11 no.4, emerged in a late-Romantic style, stiffened by a good deal of counterpoint, and has become one of his most popular works; that for solo viola,

op.11 no.5, made of sterner stuff and ending in a trenchant Passacaglia, has been overshadowed by the later op.25 no.1 (Potter 1995: 1120).

In this excerpt from the programme booklet for 'The International Hindemith Viola Festival' that took place in London in 1995, further comment on Hindemith as a viola player, and composer is given by Nobuko Imai:

This festival will bring together viola friends and colleagues in Tokyo, London and New York to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an uncommonly powerful musician – Paul Hindemith. As a performer, composer, conductor and educator, Paul Hindemith left many legacies; he could play any instrument and wrote for most, but his spirit is most evident in his viola music. He played the viola supremely well and his magnificent viola compositions reveal his energy, humour, passion, whilst at the same time, his loneliness and isolation (Imai 1995: 2).

Potter wrote of Hindemith's viola music in an article reviewing the festival in *The Strad*:

The viola music is very natural – he knew the potential of the instrument. The viola always used to be known as the Cinderella of stringed instruments. I think he gave it some really great repertoire...His music has so much variety. It has passion, energy, humour (Potter 1995: 1016-17).

The aforementioned Hindemith Festival provided a valuable opportunity for several authors to commit some of their ideas on the composer's viola music to paper. For example, Potter wrote of Hindemith's string music with special reference to the viola works:

Paul Hindemith's centenary year is almost over and by now *Strad* readers will probably know what their attitude is to this still-controversial composer. To those who are yet unconverted, I would like to make a plea that they give his string music a chance. And though I value his quartets, especially the Third and Fifth, and feel that the adorable little E major Sonata should be in the repertoire of every violin-and-piano duo, I happily rest my case on the music featuring the viola – Hindemith's own instrument in a leading role.

We who love the sound of strings often lament the passing of the old-style virtuoso composer. But in looking for another Paganini, Vieuxtemps or Wieniawski let us not overlook Hindemith who, almost alone, continued the tradition into the twentieth century. He can be seen as a Renaissance man, in the breadth of his sympathies and the multiplicity of his skills as composer,



player of countless instruments, conductor, writer, teacher, draughtsman/cartoonist and humorist. He renewed an even older tradition, that of the self-effacing German craftsmen of the Middle Ages, with his belief that music should not glorify its creator but serve a useful function. Through his compositions, Hindemith helped to make up some of the ground the viola had lost in the nineteenth century; he even gave the viola d'amore, which he played, some worthwhile new repertoire (Potter 1995: 1120).

The **second sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4** was composed in November 1922, eight months after Hindemith had completed the sonata for solo viola op.25 no.1. It was dedicated to Ladislav Černý, a viola virtuoso from Prague. Hindemith discussed the genesis of the sonata with American violist, Ishaq Arazi:

I had coffee with Černý one day and he was editing one of my compositions. [...] I was amazed to see how he saw the music – like I did. He readjusted the dynamics here and there, and from that I could see what he was trying to achieve in the balance of voices and the colouring. We talked about the viola and its lack of repertoire. The music for this sonata had been simmering in my brain for some time. [...] the fourth movement I had been using for quite a few years as my personal bowing etude and the second movement as a fingering exercise. The *Sehr langsam* movement was still in my sketchbook, ready to be used. I showed these sketches to Černý and he told me to put them together, because they were very interesting. I developed the slow movement and composed the last movement as a recapitulation based on the slow movement. I now had the last three movements. Again at Černý's suggestion I added the music which ended up as the second movement and also composed anew the *Praeludium*, based remotely on the influence of Bach. We now had five movements. Of course he saw them almost as soon as I put them on paper. He played the slow movement as slowly as possible – it seemed as if he would never finish – and the fourth movement with all its metre changes and bowing difficulties, he also worked over. One day he came rushing over to where I was living, very excited with his viola. He started to play this movement at a frenetic pace that was at first quite comical, but then he stopped when he saw me laughing and asked me why I was imitating a locomotive in the music. I couldn't understand this but he played and pointed out some high A flats, and pretty soon I heard a train whistle a couple of times, or an imitation of one at least. 'But my dear Černý, this only sounds like that because you are parodying my tempo markings and you are very rough and sloppy in doing so. No one would ever play like that.' – 'Certainly they will, if you put a fantastic metronome indication and tell them you don't care how it sounds. It would be a virtuoso's holiday and would give viola players one chance to show off' (as quoted by Potter 1995: 1122).



Potter continues looking for possible reasons for the neglect of the sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4 and the third sonata for solo viola op.31 no.4 which was completed on 23 August 1923. Op.25 no.4 was not published until fourteen years after Hindemith's death, in 1977:

In 1922 Hindemith wrote a companion Sonata for Viola and Piano op.25 no.4, a piece requiring considerable work from its performers, but responding well once mastered. In the summer of 1923, at Donaueschingen, he produced a third solo viola sonata op.31 no.4, which like op.25 no.4 was not published until after his death. The reasons for such neglect could be the daunting piano part of op.25 no.4, or the amount of strenuous first-position writing in op.31 no.4; but no doubt Hindemith's publisher Schott wanted to give op.11 no.4 and op.25 no.1 a good run. A work which was published was the delightful *Kleine Sonate* op.25 no.2 for viola d'amore and piano (Potter 1995: 1122).

Op.25 no.4 is representative of Hindemith's transitional style from 'Expressionism' to the 'New Objectivity', and his method of clarifying tonality out of bitonality and atonality is also present in this sonata. Samuel Rhodes, Professor of Viola at the Juilliard School and violist with the Juilliard Quartet wrote about Hindemith as a viola player in his article in the programme for the 1995 festival:

In the 1920's Hindemith was becoming known as one of the foremost viola soloists and chamber music players of his generation. In addition to the standard repertoire, he performed works by many of his contemporaries such as Bartók, Schönberg, Milhaud, Stravinsky and Walton. At the same time he was performing his own newly-created works, one after the other. We should realise, however, that as extensive as his performing career may have been, it represents only one of the areas of music with which he was concerned. Indeed, Hindemith's love and enthusiasm for the art of music was so immense that there was no region within its boundaries to which he did not make a significant contribution.

A glance through his catalogue of compositions will show that he wrote for every genre of music, utilising just about all possible instrumental and vocal combinations. Besides the four sonatas for solo viola and the three for viola and piano which will be performed in this series, there are solo and duo sonatas for the other strings: two sonatas for solo violin, a sonata for viola d'amore and piano, a sonata for solo cello and two for cello and piano, and a sonata for double bass and piano (Rhodes 1995: 4).



The **sonata for viola and piano, composed in 1939**, was written for Hindemith and the Puerto-Rican pianist Jesùs Maria Sanromà to perform during the composer's third tour to the United States. This work is representative of Hindemith's increasingly conservative style of the late 1930's, and in it the composer puts into practice his theories from *The Craft of Musical Composition, Volume I*. Potter describes the sonata as 'a magnificent work which has justly been described as one of the greatest duos for piano and a stringed instrument' (Potter 1995: 1123).

Turning his attention to Hindemith's viola playing, Potter writes:

Hindemith can be heard on recordings as a competent pianist, but most rewardingly as a violist. In this guise his eminence is based as much on his sturdy musicianship and affinity with his own playing, which even in his heyday was not universally admired. He employed a good many slides, played virtually without vibrato and avoided overt displays of emotion. Rhythmic definition, clarity of counterpoint and the overall musical line seem uppermost in his mind, rather than tonal allure. This order of priorities led to his being misunderstood. The superscription of the fourth movement of his Solo Viola Sonata, op.25 no.1 – 'Beauty of tone is of secondary importance' – has often been quoted and, though it was Černý's idea to make the movement so fast, people have talked of Hindemith as if he applied the principle to all his playing; neither Tertis nor Primrose had a good word to say for him as a performer. It is true that in the context of the Goldberg-Hindemith-Feuermann trio, Hindemith sounds somewhat archaic, his regressive tendencies emphasised by being set against two of the most advanced techniques of his time. Even when he is playing his own music, there is a distinct gap between the modernity of the material and the outmoded way in which it is put over. Hindemith's left hand could get around the viola with considerable virtuosity; and when his bowing was a trifle awkward, the effect was usually intended, for expressive or dramatic reasons. Nor should his preference for playing *senza* vibrato be confused with coldness: his recorded performances contain ample evidence of his lofty aims and his commitment to the music. There is no doubt that we are listening to a unique personality and a first-rate musician (Potter 1995: 1125).

From all this, the conclusion may now be drawn that Hindemith's intention appears to have been to compose accessible works for himself to perform, as well as to provide valuable additions to the limited viola repertoire. It appears not to be a coincidence

that Hindemith chose the viola as his main performance instrument, and even less of a coincidence that it was during the most successful and turbulent period of his performing and composing life that he composed these sonatas.

It is this set of circumstances that has prompted me to attempt to draw a comprehensive sketch of Hindemith's life during this time, to delve into each of the sonatas from their genesis up to their first performances and publication, and to trace Hindemith's development between 1919 and 1939 as it is manifested in these works. I have chosen to bridge the gap of detailed knowledge about these works through biographical, comparative and analytical methods of research.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of Hindemith's character traits as viewed by scholars. The chapter continues with mention of the political and social climate in Germany in 1919, providing a basis for understanding Hindemith's situation after returning from military service at the front. The remainder of the chapter divides the period 1919-1939 into six sub-sections. The division of the sections was selected according to important events and changes in Hindemith's musical development, as well as socio-political influences during this period. Each of these sections discusses and reviews the literature available, while quoting from Hindemith's own letters and sketching his personal contacts with other musicians concerning his political, social, financial and musical position in Germany during this period. The specific circumstances surrounding the composition of each sonata, first performances of each work, other sonatas written in the same period and the publication of each work, supported by correspondence and information provided by biographers is also included in this chapter in the relevant position under these six sub-headings.



Chapter 2 presents an overview of Hindemith's style development between 1919-1939 as viewed by scholars and with reference to important characteristics and significant changes apparent in the three sonatas for viola and piano. The possible effect of late Romantic composers such as Debussy and Reger on Hindemith's early style with reference to op.11 no.4, and if and how political changes in the late 1920's set off a change in his style. The structure and characteristics of other sonatas composed between 1919-1939 are used as a means of comparison. This chapter also makes reference to and provides examples from sections of each of the works analysed according to the *Craft of Musical Composition*. An in depth style, harmonic, formal and thematic analysis is also included.

This study aims to assimilate the available information dispersed over a wide array of sources, including several biographies as well as the various and selective publications of Hindemith's correspondence, into an accurate and coherent picture of the composer's life and stylistic development between 1919-1939 in a way that has not been presented before. The study also makes available information gleaned from sources in German that would otherwise not be accessible to English language readers. I hope that the unique style of the sonatas, their accessibility and intriguing musical characteristics, as well as their importance in the sonata repertoire will be of interest to other viola players, and will possibly even encourage players who would not usually have played these works to do so.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **General background to Hindemith's compositional development between 1919-1939 with reference to the three sonatas for viola and piano**

This extensive chapter has been divided into six sub-headings covering the twenty-year period in which the three sonatas for viola and piano were composed. They are: **1919-1929; 1930-1931; 1932-1933; 1934; 1935-1936 and 1937-1939.** These particular divisions were chosen with two different aims in mind: firstly to be able to describe the political, social and financial circumstances at the time each work was written, and secondly to be able to focus on specific events that needed more explanation and details than others. For example, 1934 needed special detail relating to the 'The Hindemith Case' and how this affected Hindemith's life, compositional and performing career. The sub-headings merely sectionalise various changes and significant events between 1919-1939. There are detailed sections incorporated within these sub-headings discussing circumstances surrounding the composition, first performances, dates of publication and social and political background of each of the viola/piano sonatas.

At the outset ideas and comments on Hindemith's character will be given in order to assist the reader in understanding the nature of much of his correspondence and reactions to events in his career as they are discussed in this dissertation.



Paul Hindemith was an intensely private man, in fact he was downright secretive, and throughout his life he remained reluctant to divulge any information close to his heart or otherwise. He did not write an autobiography and had no desire to write one. His favourite device to protect himself against unwanted prying was humour. He made prolific use of this weapon in his personal relationships, as well as in his work in all areas, including the letters. These make very entertaining reading and reveal that he was as much at ease with words as he was with his 'sounding blueberries', as he once called music notes (as quoted by Skelton in *Hindemith-Jahrbuch* 1998: 25). Several authors attest to this fact. Some representative examples deserve to be quoted. When asked in 1921 to write a biography for the Festival for New Music at Donaueschingen, where the Amar Quartet, of which he was the violist, performed his new compositions amongst other works, Hindemith himself wrote only the essential information and nothing else:

I was born in Hanau in 1895. Music study from the age of twelve. As violinist, violist, pianist or percussionist I have made a thorough survey of the following musical territories: Chamber music of all kinds, cinema, café, dance music, operetta, jazz band, military music. I have been leader of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra since 1916. As composer, I have chiefly written pieces I don't like anymore: chamber music for the most diverse ensembles, songs and piano pieces. Also, three one-act operas, which will probably remain the only ones since as a result of the rising price of manuscript paper only small scores can now be written. I cannot give analyses of my own works because I don't know how to explain a piece of music in a few words (I would rather write a new one in the time). Besides, I think that for people with ears my things are perfectly easy to understand, so an analysis is superfluous. For people without ears such cribs can't help. Neither do I write out single themes, which always give a false impression (as quoted by Roseberry 1976: 305-6).

Andres Briner quotes Hindemith in his biography of the composer: 'If you go to a tailor, you don't want your portrait or photograph, but a well-fitting suit. If people want to know me, they should look at my works' (as quoted by Bruhn 1998: 51).



This viewpoint is supported by Rudolf Stephan when he writes:

He never lost his shyness in talking about anything personal. Hindemith was convinced that the times during which subjectivity had been so much overestimated were now over, and that the day had come when neither the expression of individual views and emotions nor any artistically noncommittal playfulness were adequate in compositions. Instead, artistic 'works' in the emphatic sense of the term should be written, undisturbed by the personality of the composer (as quoted by Bruhn 1998: 51).

Placing the emphasis on a more personal level Skelton observes that Hindemith:

[...] was more than reticent about his private life. Known to all his friends and chamber-music partners as a man of immense, never-tiring humour, he tended to use this jesting talent, especially in his professional and more formal social contacts, as a protective device to mask his deep emotions and his increasing spiritual orientation (as quoted by Bruhn 1998: 51).

This is echoed by Bruhn:

In this regard particularly, the composer's wish to let his works stand in for a biography led to an extremely unusual situation. The impression is that of a juxtaposition of two personas. On the one hand, there is the stocky, outwardly unsentimental, early-balding man of boundless energy who had once, in a soldier's letter from World War I, called himself not particularly religious.

On the other there are his written statements. One source, not intended for the public, are the recently published letters to his wife (entitled, after Hindemith's own description of what his continuous private dialogue with Gertrud meant for him, '*Das Private Logbuch*'). It appears as if there is an entry for almost every day they were separated, some letters even of up to twenty-two pages in length (during his first months as an emigrant in America when Gertrud could not obtain a visa for herself). These letters document a great love and tenderness apparently undiminished over almost forty years of marriage, a sharing of thoughts, doubts, reactions and feelings among like-minded souls that even their friends, who often commented on Gertrud's lack of graciousness in social interactions, may not have fully understood (Bruhn 1998: 51-2).

Bernard Heiden described Hindemith's character the year after his death in an article in the *American Choral Review*:

He was a jovial, happy person and a marvellous host. He would often have gatherings at his home for students and faculty, and they were merry affairs. One of his hobbies was to collect misspellings of his name and he delighted in finding one that reflected the interests of the sender. He had several bills from a

butcher, for example, that were addressed to a Professor Hindemeat! (Heiden 1964: 2).

Geoffrey Skelton observes that:

[...] beneath the sturdy façade there was a contemplative, profoundly serious artist. He lived and breathed music as naturally and involuntarily as all of us breathe air. For him music was not only a part of living. [...] it was the whole of living. In his view it was the social duty of a musician, as of any good farmer, to make his products not only as good as possible, but accessible – even palatable (Skelton 1975: 12-13).

The following impression by Nobuko Imai reinforces what has been said thus far:

I went to his house in Switzerland and saw so many funny pictures. [...] he had drawn fantastic cartoons of animals of the zodiac all over the walls and he drew his wife as a friendly lion, standing by him as he played the organ. When he went abroad to get away from Hitler, you can feel it in the music – he was a very lonely man. He lived in such a difficult period. But I am amazed by his extraordinary energy, composing all the time. His life was dedicated to music (as quoted by Potter 1995: 1017).

Skelton writes of Hindemith's zest for life:

He enjoyed life. Always open to its influences, he could accept what it placed in his way and additionally find the means of putting it to the service of his art. [...] His works are a reflection of that inner integrity which only those who are unsympathetic to it would call obstinacy (Skelton 1975: 21).

Bruhn writes of another aspect of Hindemith's character, one that some biographers have labelled as his 'latent melancholy'. This made him a man of great contrasts, ranging between the 'private, voraciously reading, thinking and musing man, and the merry, apparently worry-free musician seen in public' (Bruhn 1998: 52).

And Michael Kater writes:

His political awareness was less than developed; Hindemith's sense of anarchism and revolt at the beginning of the republican era, indeed his sense of politics, was fuzzy and naïve rather than serious and well-founded. It seemed



that politically he could be typecast as little as he could be artistically (Kater 2000: 32).

In Hindemith's obituary, Wilhelm Furtwängler spoke of Hindemith's 'knowledge of inner proportions' in music as well as of life, and of his immense purity and integrity' (as quoted by Bruhn 1998: 53).

As a shy and intensely private person, even in his often entertaining and sometimes revealing letters it is difficult to really know what Hindemith felt. An example of this is shown in the following passage from one of his letters, written while he was serving as a soldier in World War I. He was not a fighting soldier, but was a drummer in the military band. Even so, he was still exposed to all the dangers of war. This letter was written on 26 May 1918 to a friend, Irene Hendorf, only eight days after he had completed the op.11 no.1 sonata for violin and piano:

Yesterday, an airman who saw us rehearsing and appeared not to approve of our interpretation of the Parsifal Prelude – tried to drop a bomb on us [...] but didn't do anything, giving up its ghost about a hundred metres away and just sending us running for dear life (as quoted by Skelton 1998: 26).

A day after this he described an air attack in a private diary:

How coarse and indifferent one becomes! I don't think I could previously have eaten or worked after a sight like that. But now one sits calmly writing and carrying on conversations with never a thought of how soon our hours might come (as quoted by Skelton 1988: 26).

This truly reveals how perhaps not giving anything away to anyone else, he most certainly felt deeply disturbed and worried by the events unfolding around him. As far as researchers know, this wartime diary is the only one of a private and personal nature that Hindemith kept in his lifetime. It is for the most part just a factual record

of daily activities, with only the occasional introspective comment, such as the one quoted above.

The wartime diary, more than any other source during this period accurately illustrates Hindemith's literary preferences and passions during this period. His literary tastes were also largely unknown, and since much of his music was based on poetry and literature it is an important area of concern. The following brief quote is from this diary: 'At noon, praise God, the longingly awaited parcel of books arrived' he wrote. 'A sunbath was arranged, during which I greedily read' (as quoted by Skelton 1988: 27). The names mentioned in the diary include Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Gogol and some German Expressionists. The list of poets whose works Hindemith later set to music during this wartime period, as well as later in his career, provides an even clearer picture: aside from Morgenstern, it includes Walt Whitman (the second movement of the op.11 no.3 sonata for cello and piano was based on one of his war time poems), George Trakl, Rainer Maria Rilke, Gottfried Benn, Paul Claudel and Hölderlin.



## 1919-1929

In order to provide an adequate background for Hindemith's circumstances in 1919, this section includes information on the financial and political situation in Germany at this time. This also provides the background for the turbulent political and divergent musical world that resulted in the multi-faceted and impressionistic sonata for viola and piano, op.11 no.4. Michael Laffan writes in his book *The Burden of German History: 1919-1945*, describing this unstable period into which Hindemith began his compositional career:

In its political history the relatively tranquil late 1920's were sandwiched between two periods of acute instability; revolution, violence and inflation scarred Weimar's early years, while unemployment, extremism and authoritarian government dominated its close. German attitudes and policies towards the rest of Europe were, by contrast, both stable and predictable. Governments adopted different tactics, revealed different degrees of skill and achieved different measures of success, but from June 1919 to January 1933, and even beyond, they shared a common objective which transcended all others: to destroy the Treaty of Versailles (Laffan 1988: 81).

The Treaty of Versailles shocked the German public with its harshness:

The new democratic Republic was effectively to be demilitarised, its navy limited to 15 000 and its army to 100 000. It was to possess no tanks, warplanes or submarines and was to be allowed only six battleships. The general staff was to be dissolved and was not to be reconstituted in any form. Conscription was to be abolished, and the imposition of long-term military service was designed to prevent Germany from following Prussia's example between 1807 and 1813 by building up large reserves of trained soldiers. All her colonies were taken from her. In one of the treaty's most humiliating clauses Germany was forced to acknowledge responsibility for the war, and she was also obliged to sign a blank cheque promising to pay whatever reparations the allies should deem appropriate. Two years later these were fixed at £6,600,000,000.

Most importantly of all, Germany's frontiers were re-drawn and she was compelled to yield territory to several of her neighbours. Eupen-Malmédy was transferred to Belgium, North Schleswig to Denmark, Alsace-Lorraine to France, Memel to Lithuania, and West Prussia, Posen and part of Silesia to Poland. She would lose one-eighth of her area and 6 million of her population. The separation of East Prussia from the rest of her country and the surrender of ethnic Germans to the rule of the despised Poles were sources of particular bitterness (Laffan 1988: 80-81).

According to Hinton 'it is undeniable that Weimar's turmoil, its economic collapse and mass unemployment, created the necessary breeding ground for the disastrous political polarisation' (Hinton 1989: 42). Hindemith's career was just starting as the Treaty of Versailles was signed and as the events sketched above began to unfold. Having taken part in the war, albeit not in active combat, Hindemith could not have remained totally unaffected by these developments. On the other hand the 'relatively tranquil late 1920's', and the increasingly liberal intellectual and artistic climate that began to flourish in parallel, provided the ideal circumstances for Hindemith's progressive development.

Hindemith's career as a composer began in earnest with the first performance of his op.11 sonatas and his op.10 string quartet no.1 in June 1919. Having returned from military service at the end of the previous year, he continued to lead the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, as well as joining the Rebner Quartet, but at his own request as violist rather than second violinist. In 1919 the publishing firm of B. Schott's Söhne agreed to publish Hindemith's string quartet op.10 no.1 and the op.11 sonatas. The first sonata for viola and piano op.11 no.4 was composed in February - March 1919. The prospect of his works being published gave Hindemith 'self-confidence', releasing 'unrivalled creative energy' (Schubert 2001: 524).

The viola sonata op.11 no.4 belongs to a set of six sonatas for string instruments Hindemith began composing during the last months of the war, and in the time immediately following his release from military service. It is therefore important to recognise that op.11 no.4 was not written as an isolated piece, but that it forms part of a large-scale project he was absorbed with at the time. Consequently it shares a



common stylistic approach with its sister works, an approach in which Hindemith still acknowledges the influence by other composers – notably Debussy, but also manages to project very clearly his own, individual voice. Thus the viola sonata needs to be understood within this broader context. For that reason it is deemed necessary to describe the circumstances under which the entire op.11 came into being. These begin with Hindemith's period of military service.

On August 13 1917, less than two years before he wrote op.11 no.4, and only one year before he made the decision to change from the violin to the viola, Hindemith was called up for service in the German Army. He was placed in an infantry regiment for training, with the rank of musketeer. In a letter dated 6 September 1917 to a family friend, Emmy Ronnefeldt, Hindemith described early life in service as pleasant. He also mentioned that he was permitted to continue his work in the theatre without attending the usual rehearsals, and even allowed to sleep at home much of the time.

In a letter to Emmy Ronnefeldt from 28 November 1917 he wrote:

I am still hoping my transfer application will be granted: it should come anytime now. And when that is in hand, I may sail off at once, perhaps in a few days time. [...] With every one of my superiors, from the captain to the corporal, I am on the best footings (my own, of course). My captain grants me all kinds of concert leave straight off without a murmur, the lieutenants are constantly questioning me about theatre affairs, and the rest (from sergeants downwards) are being continuously supplied with theatre tickets. [...] I hope to become a lance corporal soon. And that will be very necessary, for if I have to pay for all the many theatre tickets, I shall no longer manage on my 3.30 Marks per decade. Should I not be promoted in the foreseeable future, I shall have to put in for a wage increase (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 16).



These comments on his life in the service indicate how much his talent and personality counted in his favour with his fellow soldiers and also those in a superior position to him.

Hindemith's application to transfer to a military band was granted, and on 16 January 1918 he joined another infantry regiment, stationed at Tagolsheim in Alsace, a front-line village, as a drummer. Though his official position was as a drummer in the regimental band, his main job was to play string quartets.

Hindemith wrote to Dr. Carl Schmidt of his satisfaction with his new position on 19 January 1918:

Now at last I have time to reply to your letter. [...] In the meantime, however, I have moved up to the front. Here I am living like a pig in clover. Hardly any duties. True, we are stationed in a front line village, but the trenches are a full 3km away. The artillery is shooting all day long, but not in our direction. [...] Officially I am a drummer in the regimental band, but my main task is playing string quartets. My partners are unfortunately not first-class, but they are very keen and make a tremendous effort (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 17).

The quartet was required to play frequently for the Regimental Commanding Officer, Graf von Keilmannsegg, who was, in Hindemith's own words, a 'great music lover and connoisseur and admirer of French art' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 49). He was extremely kind to Hindemith during his time at the front, and allowed him much free time to dedicate to practice and composition. On 25 March 1918, the quartet was performing Debussy's String Quartet, and in the middle of their performance it was announced on the radio that Debussy had just died. Hindemith's description of the incident is related in the booklet *Paul Hindemith: Zeugnis in Bildern*:

Just after we had finished the slow movement the signal officer burst in and reported in great consternation that the news of Debussy's death had just come

through on the radio. (25 March 1918) We did not continue our performance. It was as if the spirit had been removed from our playing. But now we felt for the first time how much more music is than just style, technique and an expression of personal feeling. Here music transcended all political barriers, national hatred and the horrors of war. Never before or since have I felt so clearly in which direction music must be made to go (as quoted by Strobel 1955: 8).

This is a rare show of emotion from Hindemith, and clearly illustrates how much Debussy's music must have meant to him. Although Debussyian characteristics are evident in the op.11 no.1 and 2 sonatas, it is only in no.4 that it becomes apparent the enormous influence the French composer had on Hindemith. He composed his string quartet no.1 op.10 in f minor in February/March 1918. This first quartet was dedicated to Emmy Ronnefeldt's parents for their silver wedding anniversary. Emmy Ronnefeldt was a friend Hindemith had made while awaiting his induction into the army. She was the daughter of a wealthy Frankfurt family who had taken an interest in the Hindemith brothers after their father had left for the war. Hindemith's correspondence with Emmy is used in this chapter in connection with the op.11 and op.25 sonatas.

The op. 11 sonatas were begun in May 1918 while Hindemith was still at the front in France. The first work in the set of six sonatas was the sonata for violin and piano op.11 no.1 in E flat. In a letter to the Schmidt family written on 9 May 1918 Hindemith wrote:

I have finished writing the violin sonata I began in your house (op.11 no.1); there was still one movement to do. If I can get some music paper in the next few days I shall copy it out and send it to you. Altogether I have composed quite a lot: a big string quartet, and now am busy on a sonatina for piano and violin (op.11 no.2) [...] (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 19).



In a highly significant letter to Emmy Ronnefeldt dated 28 September 1918 from France, Hindemith mentions not only the beginning of his op.11 but also reveals his plans for an entire set of sonatas, to be composed over several years:

It's not easy writing in a dugout, it's too cramped and too wet, and all day long one's ears are ringing with the sound of eternal gunfire. Outside, shells are flying around our heads. [...] But enough of this grumbling, it won't do any good. [...] Recently I have got back to composing, after having absolutely no ideas since June. The day before yesterday I completed the first movement of a sonatina for violin and piano. The last movement I am working on now, but I haven't yet got the middle movement. The piece will sound very *al fresco*, with great thick and widely sweeping brush strokes. The other sonatina, on which I was working during my leave, is also not quite finished; it's just that I can't find the right approach to this interrupted work. I want to write a whole series of these sonatinas, which in fact = small sonatas, since they are too lengthy for sonatinas. Each one is to be totally different in character from the one before, in form too. I want to see whether in a series of pieces I can extend the expressive possibilities - which are not very great in this type of music and with this combination of instruments - and bring them closer to the horizon. Many years will pass before I finish this work - if I live to see it, or keep my health. I believe it will be an interesting task. But I am sorry for the poorer people who - attracted by the poster that two enthusiastic musicians, no longer quite right in the head, will paste on the walls in twenty years' time - will buy tickets and then imagine they can sit back and enjoy themselves.

[The table on the following page was included in the letter relating to Hindemith's joke concerning a series of sonata recitals in twenty years time]

### ...Concert Hall

#### 12 Sonata Recitals

1-12 February 1938

| I  |                   | II |                                       | III |  |
|----|-------------------|----|---------------------------------------|-----|--|
| 1. | E flat major      | 5. | Sonatina, variations on a single note | 8.  | In three-voice counterpoint (would-be) |
| 2. | D Minor           | 6. | F minor and A major (mixed)           | 9.  | With light and colours etc             |
| 3. | No particular key | 7. | With drum beat                        |     |  |
| 4. | Dorian            |    |                                       |     |  |

[...] I have sent quite a few pieces of music home (from Douai), piano pieces, piano concertos, and things for piano duet. There is a lot of music lying around in private houses and music shops. It is a shame to see it all just getting dirty and unusable. Altogether it is a shame, the way everything is being destroyed here; I should be quite glad not to have to watch it all happening! (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 21-22).

This letter indicates Hindemith's intended experimentation with the op.11 sonatas and provides a starting point for understanding the context of how the works were conceived. It also brings to the fore Hindemith's youthful and naïve opinions concerning the 'expressive possibilities' of this combination, retrospectively highlighting this 'youthful' project as one of the biggest and most successful in his career. It may have begun as fun in 1914 with the sketches of op.11 no.4, but the sonata project provided a work for every instrument of the orchestra and lasted thirty-five years. The sentiment of the letter and the outlandish humour all point towards denial of the horrors of being at the front, and his strong will to find the best in every situation.

Hindemith was released from military service at the beginning of 1919 and returned to Frankfurt to continue his job as concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra. As mentioned earlier he also rejoined the Rebner Quartet, this time as violist. Op.11 no.4 was written between 27 February and 9 March 1919 in Frankfurt. Hindemith originally intended the entire op.11 to be written for violin and piano, but the set actually consists of three sonatas for violin, two for viola and a sonata for cello. In the following table six sonatas are listed in the op.11 set, however, op.11 no.6, which was composed in 1916 was only published in 2002. The opus number was arbitrarily assigned by the Hindemith Institute.



| COMBINATION              | OPUS<br>NUMBER | KEY        | DATE OF COMPOSITION  |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------|--|
| Violin and piano         | op.11 no.1     | E flat     | May 1918   |
| Violin and piano         | op.11 no.2     | D<br>minor | September-November 1918  |
| Violoncello and<br>piano | op.11 no.3     |            | July-August 1919/revised and<br>completed in 1921  |
| Viola and piano          | op.11 no.4     | F          | February-March 1919  |
| Solo viola               | op.11 no.5     |            | July 1919  |
| Solo violin              | op.11 no.6     | G<br>minor | Published in 2002 – 1916 (opus number<br>arbitrarily assigned by the Hindemith<br>Institute) |

Op.11 no.4 is in three continuous movements. Hindemith's inscription on the title page of the work reads as follows:

The sonata should be played without breaks. The second and third movement should be joined so well that the listener does not realise they are hearing the finale, but merely a continuation of variations.

It appears that the sketches of parts of this sonata were written during two different periods, although the exact dates of the origins of the individual movements cannot be deduced. It is not certain that the *Fantasie* and beginning of the second movement originated earlier, but it is probable. The first set of sketches are from 1914-1916 consisting of a draft of the first movement and Theme and Variation 1 from the second movement. The introductory bars in the piano at the start of the first movement as well as the title *Fantasie* were originally crossed out in the sketch. The use of a title of this nature, which in itself was unique in Hindemith's early sonatas,

seems to be closer to the intimacy of his Three op.8 pieces for cello and piano composed in 1915. The titles of these three pieces are as follows: *Capriccio – Lebhaft*, *Phantasiestück – Mäßig langsam* and *Scherzo – Mäßig schnelle Achtel*. This possibly implies that Hindemith may have been intending to follow up on these cello/piano pieces with a comparable set for viola and piano, but was distracted soon after the beginning with this idea. It appears that once he had started on the ‘sonata project’ (op.11) from May 1918 he either intentionally or otherwise abandoned the idea of pieces for viola and piano, and must have decided to use his sketches for the start of the *Fantasie* and *Thema mit Variationen* for his sonata project. The fact that there is an enormous stylistic and character change from the second variation onwards in the second movement also supports this theory. It is also worth mentioning the change at the end of the first movement from the autograph to the published version. In the sketch Hindemith only wrote up until bar 37, and in the autograph bar 38 was seen as the final bar. A double bar-line was clearly marked at the end of this bar. Bars 39 and 40, originally used as the bridge bars, were eventually included in the autograph with *attacca subito* underneath. The two-bar extension aimed to open the end of the movement, to lead towards the following variation movement and to integrate the *Fantasie* in the cyclic form. The later sketches from 1918-1919 contain structural workings concerning form in the sonata, probably written while Hindemith was working on the Finale. Perhaps because of the unusual mixture of forms in the work Hindemith felt the need to sketch the outline and length of each section to gain a more complete overview of the work in progress. The following is a representation of part of the composer’s intentions concerning length of sections and form in the work.



The numbers of bars in each movement, section or variation until bar 239 in the finale are shown.

| I  | II | III |
|----|----|-----|
| 40 | 33 | 80  |
|    | 32 | 55  |
|    | 47 | 64  |
|    | 26 | 25  |
|    | 9  | 15  |

The bar numbers given in the second movement outline the length of each variation and those in the third show the Exposition, Variations V and VI and both of the first sections of the recapitulation. It is perhaps also relevant that on the back of the final page of the autograph of op.11 no.4 is the sketch for op.11 no.1 that Hindemith had composed at the end of May 1918.

The première of the sonata was given on 2 June 1919 by the *Verein für Theater-und-Musikkultur* in Frankfurt with Paul Hindemith (viola) accompanied by Emma Lübbecke-Job. In the same concert Hindemith gave performances of the op.10 no.1 string quartet, and of the uncompleted quintet, in which Emma Lübbecke-Job played the piano part. She also accompanied him in performances of the violin and viola sonatas of op. 11. On 10 June 1919, the critic Karl Holl of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote:

Not everything that the young composer has confided to paper during his silent hours sounds new and individual. Italian opera melody, Slav rhythms and impressionistic sounds have not been completely assimilated and made his own. But the composer's remarkable melodic invention, his surprisingly assured mastery of form and the powerful impetus of his works entitle us to speak of a creative talent far beyond the average (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 57).

Hindemith performed the sonata very regularly as part of his standard concert repertoire throughout his performing career. He played it five times in Frankfurt alone; 13 and 14 February 1920; 5 October 1921; 31 October 1923 and 13 May 1926 and also on 10 January 1923 in Barmen; 10 March 1923 in Mannheim; 3 January 1924 in Düsseldorf; 20 November 1924 in Hamborn and 26 January 1925 in Darmstadt. All of these performances were given with the pianist Emma Lübbecke-Job. Hindemith made three lengthy concert tours to America from 1937-1939, and even almost twenty years after the composition of op.11 no.4 Hindemith still performed this work thirteen times during his three visits.

Following the above-mentioned favourable critique Hindemith's former composition teacher Bernard Sekles recommended that he submit all the works performed at this first concert to a publisher. Hindemith chose the firm of B. Schott's Söhne in Mainz, managed by Geheimrat Ludwig Strecker, and his two sons, Ludwig and Willy.

When Hindemith received Willy Strecker's letter of 1 July accepting the string quartet op.10 no.1 for publication he was horrified by the sum of 100 marks that was offered as the outright fee. Hindemith replied most indignantly:

I received your letter of 1 July yesterday. My pleasure over your words of appreciation was very great indeed, but still greater was my astonishment over the remaining contents. I am fully aware that in times like these it is very difficult to publish large and serious works, and that publishers cannot live by their ideals alone (though one cannot regard as ideal the principle of making honorary payments of not more than 100 marks to composers who have not yet made 'a great name' for themselves in order to be able to use these to produce the greatest rubbish which, however, always sells well). I think I can assume that you also well know how difficult it is for a composer to believe in his ideals when he learns that for a work on which he has laboured for weeks and months



with the greatest love he is offered the paltry sum of 100 marks. The sum of 100 marks does not even pay for the music paper and copying of the parts, let alone for the time and trouble of composing the work. [...] Should you be prepared to raise the 'honorary payment' very considerably above this sum, I am ready to agree to your proposals (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 24-25).

The Strecker brothers raised their offer to 1000 marks. This was to cover the opus 11 sonatas as well as the quartet, and also gave the firm the option on all future works and an assurance of extra payment in the event of reprintings. Hindemith found this offer acceptable. This new financial support from his publishers contributed to his reputation not only as a composer, but also as a performer becoming firmly established.

The aftermath of the severity of the Treaty of Versailles resulted in political, social, economic and cultural depression, provoking experimentation within musical spheres during this period. The composition of Hindemith's op.11 and op.25 sonatas can be placed into this brittle and unstable environment. The stark contrast between these two opus numbers, composed only a few years apart, is evidence enough of the upheaval and conflict during the post-war period.

Hindemith's most important traits, both personally and musically, were his unpredictability and his adaptability. These traits found a suitable outlet in the emerging artistic trends of the Weimar Republic. On the one side he became known as the composer of avant-garde stage works such as the one-act operas *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* op.12 (1919), *Das Nusch-Nuschi* op.20 (1920) and *Sancta Susanna* op.21 (1921), and the song-cycles *Des Todes Tod* op.23a (1922) and *Die*

*junge Magd* op.23 no.2 (1922). It was in these new works that Hindemith severed all his ties with his late Romantic beginnings and began developing his own style of 'Expressionism'. These works were controversial primarily because of their extreme sexual connotations. On the other side he was composing works in a neo-Baroque style, for example the string quartet no.4 (1923) and his opera *Cardillac* (1926). It was from June to November 1922, during the period when Hindemith was developing his own style of 'Expressionism' and moving towards the 'New Objectivity', that he composed his second sonata for viola and piano, op.25 no.4.

Even so, Hindemith's interpretation of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* or 'New Objectivity' and his idea of *Gebrauchsmusik*, along with his regular performances at the Festival of New Music at Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden, placed him 'firmly in the modernist camp' (Kater 2000: 31). The term 'New Objectivity' referred to 'the simultaneous emergence of socio-political and artistic trends that emphasized the democratisation of all areas of life. *Neue Sachlichkeit* thinking in music suggested that the style of a particular work 'should depend on the character and function chosen for it' (Schubert 2001: 525). Hindemith's development was also supported by other factors: his training with the progressive teacher Bernhard Sekles at the *Hoch Konservatorium* in Frankfurt; his early interest in jazz, radio and film; his close friendship with modernist and politically left-wing conductor Hermann Scherchen; and his patronage of other new music organisations such as the *Vereinigung für zeitgenössische Musik* in Munich.

The Festival of New Music at Donaueschingen meant a great deal to Hindemith, and during the few years of its existence (1921-1927), the composers whose works were



presented ranged from Delius, Pfitzner and Ravel, to Bartók, Milhaud and Stravinsky, as well as Schönberg, Webern, and Hindemith himself. According to Preussner, Hindemith came to be associated with the festival through:

[...] a string quartet which he had written for a competition organised by Mrs Coolidge in the United States, but which was rejected, was sent by the Lübbeckes, unknown to him, to Donaueschingen in response to a newspaper advertisement calling for new works. The first Hindemith knew of it was the arrival on the doorstep of his home in Frankfurt of the festival organiser, Heinrich Burkard, bringing the news that the quartet had been accepted for performance (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 64).

This festival gave him the ideal opportunity to air his new works in an environment that was completely devoted to new music and its ideals. Skelton reiterates these sentiments:

Prolific as he was, he spent little time at this early stage of his career in reflection, but was guided much more strongly by impulse. The main task was to find new things to do and new ways to do them, and his interest was always exclusively musical. [...] Hindemith was not in fact particularly interested in the wide public, whether inside concert halls or outside. His main concern was always with the people who played music or who were able to listen to it with true understanding, preferably at informal gatherings (1975: 64).

Hindemith also had his own conception of what music is and ought to be that differed enormously from other German and Austrian composers of his time. He believed that it was the social duty of every composer, performer and concert organiser to make music not only 'dazzling', but also 'accessible'. Hindemith wanted the word *Gebrauchsmusik* to be understood as 'music that would be useful' (and not just for show) and 'music that would be used' - at gatherings of friends and for community activities, and not just 'presented' and 'consumed' in the concert hall. The idea of *Gebrauchsmusik* was that:

[...] the composer stated his awareness of the fact that music should not reflect its own time, but should condition it, enter into it as an operative and functional force; thus the composer joined those ranks of architects and writers who were

not building or writing for the sake of their own dreams, but for a society, that needed to be changed and brought to a rational awareness of social life and labour (Rognoni 1977: 51).

Skelton writes of Hindemith's music:

[...] it may often demand a high measure of technical ability but it is never made (or made to sound) deliberately difficult just in order to excite the admiration of the listener for the performer. The reason for this is that Hindemith saw music as an *active* social occupation. He wanted people to make music: merely to listen to it was not enough (Skelton 1975: 15-16).

Hindemith also spent an enormous amount of energy on improving the 'lot' of the professional orchestral musician through giving them interesting music to play in 'an approachable idiom'. He devoted much of his life to the production of music to 'fulfil the needs of practical music-making at all levels'. Hindemith did not care much for the concept of the 'great masterpiece existing on a separate plane', and he refused to be inhibited by the history of the Austro-German tradition. He instead adopted the more 'workaday' approach. This went with a 'spirit of medieval anonymity', as Hindemith identified himself more with earlier periods of music history (Roseberry 1976: 309).

The 'New Objectivity', as discussed above, can be traced in Hindemith's six *Kammermusiken*, written between 1922-1927. These works were something new:

A body of concertos deliberately modelled along pre-classical lines, with the soloist as *primus inter pares*. Rhythmically the music is built out of familiar time-signatures and patterns, and its clear phrase-structure is based on extension, elision, sequence and repetition. Hindemith's reference to the past, like Ravel's and Stravinsky's, aims at objectivity - the 'affect' of baroque rather than the subjectivity of romanticism. As in melodic style, so in forms. In the *Kammermusiken* Hindemith avoids the sonata principles with its duality of characterised themes in favour of the monothematic *ritornello* – episode, *toccata*-variations, the *passacaglia* – or the brief dance movement - the whole accommodated within the pre-sonata idea of a suite (Roseberry 1976: 307).



A letter written in September 1922 to a friend illustrates clearly that fame early on in his life had not corrupted Hindemith at all (no exact date given). He wrote that his:

[...] finest achievement has been to establish a 'musical community' here in Frankfurt. We play modern music at Zinglers in the Kaiserstrasse (once every two or three weeks) before an invited audience of about 80: a purely musical gathering without any financial complications. The audience pays nothing, the players get nothing, and the very small expenses we settle among ourselves. So here at last we have got music for music's sake! Personal ambition has no say in the matter, and there are no newspaper reviews (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 66).

In the same context, Hindemith expressed his reservation with the 'concert-hall consumption' of music. In a pamphlet from 7 July 1922 he wrote:

We are convinced that concerts in their present form are amenities that ought to be contested, and want to try to restore the almost lost communion between performers and listeners (as quoted by Bruhn 1998: 49).

As in the case of op.11 no.4, Hindemith's second sonata for viola and piano also belongs to a set of sonatas for various string instruments, this time even including the viola d'amore. These sonatas were completed in 1922, all within a few months of each other. The final work of the set, the second sonata for viola and piano, op.25 no.4 was begun in June 1922, exactly three years after the first performance of op.11 no.4. Hindemith had just recently (1921) completed the one-act operas *Sancta Susanna*, *Mörder*, *Hoffnung der Frauen* and *Das Nusch-Nuschi*, as well as his string quartets op.16 no.2 and op.22 no.3, and the parody *The Atonal Cabaret*. He had initiated the formation of the Amar Quartet (violins: Licco Amar, Walter Caspar; viola: Paul Hindemith; cello: Rudolf Hindemith) in order to perform the second string quartet at the Donaueschingen Festival, and to première the work on 1 August 1921.

Despite this prolific productivity Hindemith's financial situation remained extremely pressing. In a letter written near the end of February 1922 to Schott, Hindemith minces no words in pointing this out again:

I am not sending you the contract yet. Could you not raise the payment for these pieces a bit and, as with my previous things, grant me a share of the profits from the second printing onwards? Composition now involves me too in big expenses (The present times are unfortunately forcing me to learn a little accountancy!); the cello sonata and the new quartet, for example, have just let me in for almost 2,000 Marks in copying fees for score and parts (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 28).

The works that Hindemith was referring to in this letter were the sonata for violoncello and piano op.11 no.3, the *Three Hymns* by Walt Whitman op.14 and the string quartet in C major op.16.

The sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4, was composed during June to November 1922, in the midst of tense musical and pressing political and financial circumstances. The work was dedicated to the Steinberg's in Düsseldorf. It is no wonder that the work is neo-classical in style, in keeping with the brittle and sardonic nature of much of his music at this time inspired by the unpredictable and regressive political thinking.

The first movement was begun in Düsseldorf and completed on 9 June in Frankfurt. The second movement was completed on 9 November and the third on 15 November. Hindemith is said to have maintained that he composed the first movement at a fashion show, which was held during the *Tonkünstlerfest* in Düsseldorf, and the second movement on the train while travelling to Frankfurt. It is true that the dedicatees were owners of a fashion house in Düsseldorf. According to the dating on the autograph, however, the composing on the train is presumed to have been on the first movement as well: it is dated as Düsseldorf/Frankfurt, 9 June 1922 (Peter Cahn: Band 6/ Serie V *Streicherkammermusik*<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations from Schubert 1995, from the information supplied by Schott or from German language newspapers were translated into English by Winfried Lüdemann.



In a letter to Emmy Ronnefeldt, written in September 1922 (no exact date given) when the viola sonata was not yet completed, Hindemith looked back on the year's output thus far:

What else have I done this year? A lot of orchestra, a great many concerts, a lot of touring. And an awful lot of composing: a song cycle *Die junge Magd* with six instruments, a piano suite, a symphony for small orchestra, a wind quintet, a solo viola sonata, a sonata for viola d'amore and piano, the *Marienlieder*, another set of songs with two violas and two cellos, a sonata for viola and piano, a ballet, a solo cello sonata, and a Christmas fairy play that is to be done here and in five other theatres (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 29).

With the single exception of the sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4 all the works in the table below were published and performed extensively shortly after their completion. The op.25 no.4 sonata was finally published in 1977.

| COMBINATION             | OPUS NUMBER | DATE OF COMPOSITION |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Solo viola              | op.25 no.1  | March 1922          |
| Viola d'amore and Piano | op.25 no.2  | May 1922            |
| Solo violoncello        | op.25 no.3  | July 1922           |
| Viola and Piano         | op.25 no.4  | June-November 1922  |

The sonata for solo violoncello op.25 no.3 was written in July 1922, only five months before the sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4 was completed. In contrast to the late publication of the viola and piano sonata in 1977, the solo cello sonata was published in 1923, the year after its composition. The fact that Hindemith included this cello sonata in the list of his 'approved' works in the first edition of *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* reveals that he regarded it as 'fit for scrutiny using the methods of the *Craft* theory' (Neumeyer 1986: 124). However, in subsequent editions this example was replaced for reasons that one can only speculate on. The state of Hindemith's stylistic development at the time of writing the cello sonata is described by Neumeyer in the following way:

All but the last of the Sonata's five movements were written in one day in July 1922. Even though written very quickly, the sonata is a perfect synthesis of competing stylistic and technical claims. It blends features of traditional tonal or modal harmony with the careful, dense motivic development of the late romantics and Viennese expressionists, and with the anti-romantic irony, raucous unconcern for pretty colours, and objective formalism which characterizes Hindemith's New Objective music from 1923 on (Neumeyer 1986: 123).

Although Hindemith premièred the viola sonata within weeks of its completion and played it several times thereafter, it remained unpublished for almost six decades. This fact raises the question whether Hindemith perhaps regarded the sonata as inferior to its sister works and therefore not worthy of publication. Or were there other reasons for the delay in publication? A definite answer is difficult to come by, as the following pieces of conjecture show. Whatever their differences, they all seem to agree at least that Hindemith's regard for the work is not in question.

The first performance of the sonata took place:

[...] on 10 January 1923 in Elbersfeld-Barmen (with Hindemith and Emma Lübbecke-Job). Subsequent performances (always designated as op.25 no.3 took place on 10 May in Donaueschingen, and 31 October in 1923 in Frankfurt [...] Hindemith offered the sonata to the publisher in January and July 1923. As the solo sonata for viola op.25 no.1 went into print at approximately the same time and the sonata op.11 no.4 had just appeared in the previous year, the publisher saw no great haste in printing yet another work for viola. So the sonata remained unpublished. The reason for Hindemith not prompting the publisher to print the work even at a later stage may be that the inner change he underwent made him more critical towards his earlier works. On the other hand he obviously held the work in high regard and loved to play it. It is one of those unpublished pieces that Hindemith himself had wished to be included in a *Gesamtausgabe* of his works. In its expressiveness and simplicity the slow movement can be positioned close to the *Marienleben*. By comparison the outer movements, with their driving rhythms and concertato style, point forward to the *Kammermusiken* op.36, while, in the cantabile character of their secondary themes, they show a marked resemblance to the sweeping melodic style of several of Hindemith's earliest works (Schott).



A different opinion on Hindemith's view of the work appears in this translation from the article '*Konzert des Zürcher Melos-Trio*' from *Neue Zeitung* published on 12 September 1980. The context is that of the first performance of op.25 no.4 by members of the Melos Trio on 8 September 1980 (András von Tószeghi - viola and Hadassa Schwimmer - piano):

It is not quite possible to know whether Hindemith withheld this sonata from the publisher because he wished to reserve it for his own use as a viola soloist or whether he was not quite satisfied with its form yet. Now it is included in the complete published works and Tószeghi is the first one to have made use of it. Excellent use, in fact (as quoted in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*: 1980).

Two years before op.25 no.4 was published an article on the sonata by Hildegard Weber appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 6 August 1975. The context is the Hindemith 'workshop' that took place in Blonay near Geneva (Hindemith's last domicile after returning to Europe from the USA) at the time of the newspaper report and organised by one of Hindemith's former American pupils Howard Boatwright. A performance of the sonata for viola and piano op 25 no. 4 was given by Ron Golan (viola) and Denise Duport (piano).

Rarely performed works by Hindemith were included in the programme. A case in point was the first performance in fifty years of the Sonata for Viola and Piano op 25, which has up to now not been printed but will be published as op. op.25 no.4 in the new Hindemith *Gesamtausgabe*. This work, which was performed for the first time in Elbersfeld in 1923 by the composer and [...] Emma Lübbecke-Job (according to Andres Briner in his introduction), was played publicly another five times up to 1926. However, it was not published, probably due to the large number of other works Hindemith composed at the time. Even a publisher like Schott could not keep up with Hindemith's tempo of composing. The renewed performance by the Genevan violist Ron Golan and pianist Denise Duport resembled a discovery: This sonata, written for Hindemith's preferred personal instrument, has the pithy vigour and, in the second movement, the profound introspection of the best of the composer's early period, furthermore an uncommonly difficult and effective but thrillingly impudent finale (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 August 1975).



Despite their unquestioned value and stylistic qualities, the op.25 sonatas remain characteristic of Hindemith's early style, and do not completely reflect his change to the 'New Objectivity' that can be observed from 1923 onwards.

Hindemith negotiated with B. Schott's Söhne in 1923 for a guaranteed monthly income, and was able to resign from his position as concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra. He had already written to Emmy Ronnefeldt of his changing circumstances and desire for independence from the orchestra in September 1922 (no exact date given):

The spirit of enterprise has seized hold of me. Last year I finally left the Rebner Quartet, but in May I founded a proper quartet of my own: The Amar Quartet. We play only modern music and are kept very busy. In the summer we played at both the Donaueschingen and Salzburg festivals – with very great success. At both the above festivals I once again succeeded in scoring over all the other composers, and since then my affairs have been blooming beyond all expectations. All over the place my things are being performed. [...] Publishers are falling over one another to get me, and I am making use of the favourable constellation to pick out the one who will pay me the most, and then I shall get out of the orchestra and spend my full time composing and playing in the quartet (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 29).

A month later, on 31 October 1922 Hindemith wrote to Herr Dr. Strecker at Schott with regards to his desire for a more permanent arrangement with the publishing house:

[...] I have in front of me the contracts I have made with you so far. They show that in 1919 I gave you four chamber music works for a total sum of 1,000 marks. Additionally, you took on the preparation of my operatic material without the slightest risk to yourselves, since I bore all the expenses myself. [...] Furthermore, you have received in the spring 4 things for a total of 10,000 marks, and, more recently, another four larger and smaller compositions for the same sum. On top of this, you have an option on all my compositions for the next ten years.

The fact is that for a relatively small sum you have been 'stocked' by me with a host of pieces, of which some are already selling well and most are often played...So in the course of the next few years you will not only be covering your costs but probably also doing good business with my things. I am very



unskilled in financial matters and until recently knew nothing about fees and royalties. How does this behaviour match with the fine words in the introduction to your catalogues? Does it come under the heading of 'bigheartedness' and 'idealism'? I say nothing about the fact that you paid me poorly for my first things. I was unknown and you could not know what might one day come of them.

I have here, from three large publishing houses, offers that show beyond all doubt that you have – to put it mildly – been making a complete fool of me, and I can, I suppose, assume that you would have continued along the same lines if I had not made a move. So, to cut a long story short: if you outbid by a considerable amount the highest of these offers, I shall be happy to stay with you. Should you not feel inclined to do this, I shall be released from my contract, since other publishers are offering me more and in consequence will receive the compositions on conditions less loaded in their own favour. At the same time, I draw your attention to the fact that two of the offers will enable me to give up my job at the theatre and thus release me from the shackles that greatly hindered my composing activities.

A few days ago I saw a contract of one of my friends, an instrumentalist who some years ago hoped to make a career as a composer, had made with a large publishing firm. This contract, made in 1919, gave him a fixed monthly salary of 500 marks, to be adjusted in line with any eventual currency changes, and, in addition to that, royalties on each separate work (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 30-31).

This change of financial circumstances also coincided with Hindemith's first explicitly religious composition. *Das Marienleben*, was written in 1922/23. Hindemith revised the work numerous times between 1922 and the final version in 1948. Bruhn writes how these numerous revisions express the closeness of this cycle to Hindemith's heart and conscience as an 'ethically responsible artist' (Bruhn 1975: 58). The composition of *Das Marienleben* also coincided with Hindemith being recognised as the leading representative of the new generation of composers in Germany. Although Hindemith's change of financial situation did not have a direct effect on the op.25 sonatas or the sonata that was composed in 1939, the furthering of his compositional career was so dependent on external financial considerations along with the unstable political situation, that I felt it was important to include this information in this dissertation. The remainder of the section highlights opinions on

Hindemith's music thus far in his career and mentions important events in his performing career pertaining to the viola, as well as compositional and teaching adjustments for the remainder of the 1920's.

In 1924 a critic, Adolf Weissmann, described the twenty-nine year old composer as having:

[...] the drive to forge the link between art for the people and high art. Without sacrificing any of the achievements of new music, he nevertheless keeps his feet firmly on the ground. That's his strength. That's the new direction of the endeavours to which he devotes himself (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 162).

It appears as if Hindemith was expecting dissension within the modern music sphere.

In a letter to his publishers on 2 April 1925, he wrote:

I am firmly convinced that a big battle over new music will start in the next few years – the signs are already there. The need will be to prove whether or not the music of our day, including my own, is capable of survival. I of course believe firmly in it, but I also believe that the reproaches made against modern music are only too well deserved (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 38).

Aside from composing prolifically in varied styles during the 1920's, Hindemith became concerned with developing and writing his own method of composition. He was invited to teach composition at the Berlin *Hochschule* in 1927, and in 1929 he left the Amar Quartet and founded a string trio with Josef Wolfstahl (later replaced by Szymon Goldberg) and Emanuel Feuermann.

Richard Shead reflects on Hindemith and his composition in the 1920's in a not particularly positive light:

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) was almost as productive as Milhaud or Villa-Lobos, and his music was as uneven as that of either. Much of his output suffers from a prevalent greyness and drabness, an impression reinforced in his



later work, where the apparently innovatory quality of his earlier music had disappeared. Basically an academic, he reacted dutifully and industriously to the prevailingly cynical and satirical atmosphere of the 1920's, which he mirrored with Teutonic thoroughness. At this stage his music had the exuberance of youth, though it could not be said to have its charm. The ruthlessness of his contrapuntal procedures gave him a reputation as an atonalist, an epithet loosely used at this time and one which Hindemith never deserved. There is something more than a little depressing about Hindemith's antlike productivity in the 1920's (Shead 1976: 92-93).

This rather insulting comment on Hindemith's creative industriousness throughout the 1920's appears ill-founded and most certainly in the minority concerning his music during the early period.

As well as establishing a prolific composing career during the 1920's, Hindemith did not neglect his performing during this period. Towards the end of the 1920's Willy Strecker (Hindemith's publisher) had been making plans to launch Hindemith as a viola soloist. It was coincidental that the English composer William Walton had been asked to write a viola concerto for Lionel Tertis in 1928, and that Tertis had seen the work and refused to perform it.

When Walton had finished the work in Amalfi he sent it to Tertis, who sent it back by the next post. Susana Walton (William Walton's wife) writes of the incident in *William Walton: Behind the Facade*:

William was very hurt, and disappointed, and didn't know what to do. Viola players weren't so plentiful as all that, seemingly he had done a lot of work for nothing. So he asked Edward Clark, who was in charge of music at the BBC, if he should turn it into a violin concerto as there was no point having such a large work on his hands and no one to play it. Instead, Edward Clark sent the concerto to Hindemith to find out if he would like to play it. William had met Hindemith at the Salzburg ISCM Festival in 1923. When he gallantly agreed to play the concerto, William was delighted (Walton 1988: 68).

So at the last minute Hindemith accepted the invitation from Edward Clark to première William Walton's Viola Concerto on 3 October 1929 in one of Henry Wood's Promenade Concerts in London. Willy Strecker was appalled. He wrote to Hindemith's wife Gertrud on 8 July 1929:

The London affair is very regrettable. I want your husband, appearing there for the first time before the larger public, to do it in a worthy setting, and as a composer, not just as a soloist. An appearance with Wood to play a concerto by a moderately gifted English composer – and that is what Walton is – is not as I see it a début. Wood's Promenade Concerts are, like their conductor himself, a worthy institution, at which the playing is so-so, 30-40 soloists appear, and never a sensation of the sort I am hoping for. [...] Your husband should make himself harder to get (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 97).

Hindemith preferred to remain true to his own standards and his act of 'graciousness' towards an English composer did more to endear him to the British public than any contrived 'sensation'. Walton's comments on Hindemith's performance were, 'His technique was marvellous, but he was rough – no nonsense about it. He just stood up and played' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 98). Susana Walton writes in her biography of William Walton:

Playing William's concerto endeared Hindemith to the British public more than any number of Courtald-Sargent concerts would have done. William was obviously immensely relieved, and would later admit that he had been much influenced by Hindemith's own Viola Concerto, even 'borrowing' a few bars (Walton 1988: 69).

Another important event in 1929, which only really affected Hindemith a few years later, was Hitler's attendance at the première of his latest opera *Neues vom Tage*. The Führer had loathed it, dubbing it 'with the worst artistic epithet the Nazi's could hurl on a work that did not conform to Party ideals: degenerate' (Shirakawa 1992:180). He had been especially appalled by the scene of the soprano Laura in a flesh-coloured bodysuit sitting in a bathtub on the stage.



## 1930-1931

The radical political developments of the late 1920's and beginning of the 1930's also began to hamper Hindemith's work. Although many events mentioned in the following sections did not directly influence or effect the composition of the third and final sonata for viola and piano in 1939, it would be an incomplete account of Hindemith's musical, compositional and personal development to leave out the events of the 1930's. Just as Hindemith's reputation had been established as one of Germany's leading composer's in the 1920's, political events in the 1930's ensured eventual rejection by his own country and encouraged him to seek musical opportunity elsewhere. Hence, his concert tours from 1937-1939 in America, and the composition of the sonata for viola and piano for the final tour of this country in 1939.

Political differences led to a breach between Hindemith and Brecht, Eisler and Weill, whilst preparing for the *Neue Musik Berlin*. Brecht and Hindemith had worked together on two previous occasions. One outcome of this collaboration was 'a kind of folk oratorio' titled *Lehrstück* for the Baden-Baden Festival in 1929. The motto of the festival that year was 'Making music is better than listening to it'. Hindemith's primary concern was to produce a work where the audience would be able to participate, but Brecht's main concern was to rouse the audiences' critical observations and to ensure the clarity of the moral he was attempting to portray. The first performance on 28 July 1929 created a scandal, primarily because of a scene with very little music. It was a sketch in which clowns cure a giant of his aches and pains by sawing off the affected limbs one after another. The clown sketch was omitted for the following performances. The final outcome of the dispute was that the *Lehrstück* was 'withdrawn from circulation' and was not performed again for nearly thirty years

(Skelton 1975: 95-96). Mainly because of jealousy, Hindemith also clashed with Brecht's friend Weill 'after having composed alternate scores for a radio cantata *Der Lindberghflug*'. In the summer of 1929 Weill complained that Hindemith was 'causing a mess' at the new-music festival in Baden-Baden, where the piece was premièred, and that he was getting ready to tackle him. Later Weill 'minced' no words when he wrote that Hindemith's role in Baden-Baden that summer had been 'very shitty'. According to Weill, Hindemith's music for Brecht had been 'of an unsurpassable superficiality. It has been conclusively proved that his music is much too shallow for any text by Brecht' (as quoted by Kater 2000: 32).

Hindemith had also begun writing simple music for amateurs and children and produced music for public concerts that was generally less complicated and 'more circumscribed in its harmonic and tonal language' (Schubert 2001: 527). After 1930 Hindemith was composing works 'that were putting his once controversial avant-garde reputation well behind. Ineluctably, he now was again committed to what was regarded as an extension of traditional tonality' (Kater 2000: 33). Musicologist James Paulding writes 'that Hindemith enlarged on the Austro-German symphonic tradition by achieving a balance between strong, linear writing and a new expansion of the traditional tonal system' (as quoted by Kater 2000: 33). The *Konzertmusiken* Opp.48, 49 and 50 (1930) best represented this type of composition.



## 1932-1933

In 1932 Hindemith produced two works of a completely different nature, the *Philharmonisches Konzert* which was written at Furtwängler's invitation to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Berlin Philharmonic, and two months later, *Plöner Musiktag*, a series of instrumental and choral pieces written for and rehearsed with students from a school in Schleswig-Holstein. Hindemith wrote of the latter work:

The pieces allow, both in their layout and construction, for a lack of expertness in the players, and the teacher should not try to overcome it. To play pieces like this with the smooth brilliance of a highly-trained professional orchestra would be senseless, as it also would be to play them in the concert hall of a large town. The conditions for a 'day of music' are not everywhere as favourable as Plön. Nobody should entertain for a moment the false idea of performing all the music at once just as it is: it is far more desirable to select from them and arrange them to suit the conditions and circumstances (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 101).

*Plöner Musiktag* was the last of the group of works that Hindemith called *Gebrauchsmusik*. The fact that Hindemith did not write any more music of this nature was not due to a change in his attitude towards music and composition, but to a complete change of political circumstances in Germany. A few months after the first performance of this work the German Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, was replaced by Adolf Hitler. When the Nazi Party came to power in January 1933, Hindemith was busy working with the novelist and dramatist Ernst Penzoldt on the text of a new opera. Two months later, on 10 March 1933 Hindemith wrote to the Strecker brothers in Mainz:

To judge by what I now see happening in musical and theatrical affairs, all the key jobs will shortly be occupied by rigidly national types. Next spring, by which time the first difficulties should have been got over, the prospects for an opera by Penzoldt and myself should be very good, though maybe not for this particular text. Still, one never knows. But all the same, caution is called for,

and I am in favour of shelving this particular subject for a while and seeking another (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 105).

This letter shows that Hindemith, although not unduly concerned about the political situation, was still aware of the necessity of having to make adjustments. In all his letters to his publishers Hindemith showed no interest in politics, and unless he was asked directly for an opinion, he preferred to purely discuss his musical activities.

During the early stage of the Nazi era, Hindemith appeared to be the most likely composer to represent German music, primarily as he had been among the leading 'modernists' experimenting during the Weimar Republic. According to Kater, 'Various new compositions by Hindemith were performed all over the country, and benign critics touted him as the leader of the younger, contemporary, modern movement' (1997: 179).

However, not everything went smoothly for Hindemith. Uncertainty on his part grew as he received completely varied reactions to performances of his works. In April 1933, Willy Strecker had reason to believe that 'half the composer's works were blacklisted by the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* nationwide as those of a cultural bolshevist' (as quoted by Kater 2000: 34). A number of influential musicians antagonised Hindemith. For example, Franz von Hoesslin, a conservative conductor of the Bayreuth Festival, wrote in a letter to the new leaders that he had always been a 'champion of German music, above all our great Classical and Romantic composers' and that it had been out of the question for him to conduct something as odious as *Neues vom Tage*. There were other people who claimed that Hindemith had never been 'a representative of German music' or that stylistically he was 'at home



everywhere but in the German people's soul' (as quoted by Kater 2000: 34-35). In September 1933 Hindemith wrote to his friend Ernest Toch, 'I have been asked to co-operate and have not declined' (as quoted by Kater 1997: 179). This was referring to his collaboration with representatives of the Hitler Youth, the German Labour Front and the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*.

Hindemith's publisher, Willy Strecker wrote to him on 5 April expressing his concern with the dictatorial attitude of certain Nazi officials belonging to the *Kampfbund* towards some of the composers whose works he had published: 'Stravinsky has been put on the list of bolshevist Russian Jews and his works can no longer be played. You yourself are fifty per cent condemned as a cultural bolshevist on account of your earlier works' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 106).

Hindemith's reply on 15 April was reassuring:

To judge by what is happening here I don't think we need to worry too much about the musical future. One must just be patient for the next few weeks. So far in all the changes nothing has happened to me. Recently, just after my return from England, I had a long talk with some of the higher-ups in the *Kampfbund*. It only concerned only educational matters, but I got the impression (after I had satisfied them that I was neither a half nor any other fractional Jew) that they have a good opinion of me there. Since then they have commissioned me (though not quite officially) to work out plans for a new system of teaching composition and musical theory. Since I know how mistrustful people are, and have also seen how several who tried to curry favour have sunk without trace, I am none too anxious to carry out this tidying-up operation just now: I have no desire to curry favour [...] One of these days I shall have of course to get the *Kampfbund* to intercede on my behalf, but it is too early yet for that. In the present state of general uncertainty it won't be possible anywhere to do much. [...] But the right course for us is not to show any fear or uncertainty. God knows, we've got nothing to hide (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 106-107).

Hindemith did not personally give the names of the members of the *Kampfbund* with whom he had discussed the plans for reorganising teaching methods, but it is known that Gustav Havemann, a leading member of the *Kampfbund* had asked for his assistance. He was one of Hindemith's teaching colleagues in Berlin. He requested Hindemith's involvement with his plans for restructuring the German music profession, and invited him to submit a detailed proposal for the teaching of music theory. Prior to 1933, Nazi attitudes towards Hindemith were almost consistently hostile, so it was surprising to Hindemith that his help had been requested from a prominent Nazi activist. Hindemith initially appeared to tolerate National Socialism because he believed it to be a passing phenomenon, but he also experienced other phases when he was tempted to collaborate with representatives from the Hitler Youth, the German Labour Front and especially the *Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur*. At the same time it also appeared that Nazi attitudes towards Hindemith's music were softening. This became evident in a number of complimentary articles published about the composer in journals.

In June 1933 the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, which had previously attacked Hindemith's music, published a favourable article about the composer, emphasizing his Germanic outlook:

After the searching and roving restlessness of the years of development, new instrumental works have been composed with an allegiance to classicism and a sense of clarity and firmness which expresses the essence of German music in masterly economy of sound and form (as quoted by Levi 1994: 108).

According to Levi, Hindemith's position as the most 'important living composer after Richard Strauss' was also acknowledged by other influential politicians during 1933. This was evident with Hindemith's nomination by Strauss to the



‘inner’ council of the Composer’s Section of the *Reichsmusikkammer* in November 1933. At the same time he was asked by the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* and the organisation *Kraft durch Freude* to assist in launching a programme that would provide popular music education on a huge scale, modelled on the Italian *Dopolavoro* movement (1994: 109).

Hindemith’s attitude towards the Nazi’s was that of a citizen in a democratic country when the party he does not support comes to power. As he was not a supporter of the Nazi party he did not find it necessary to give the Nazi salute when he entered the *Hochschule*. His composition class included two Jews, an American, and Japanese as well as several German students. The late Franz Reizenstein (one of the Jewish students) said that ‘Hindemith did not make any secret of his anti-Nazi convictions. He was not afraid of being given away to the authorities, though he could have been a hundred times over’ (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 108).

Hindemith also did not see any reason why he should not continue to play chamber music in public with his Jewish colleagues. He gave the first performance of his new string trio in Antwerp on 17 March 1933 with Emanuel Feuermann and Symon Goldberg. In May of the same year, he travelled to Vienna to participate in the Brahms’s centenary celebrations to perform the op.25 Piano Quartet with his Jewish colleagues Bronislav Huberman, Pablo Casals and Artur Schnabel.

By the end of the summer of 1933 it had become obvious that the persecution of the Jews was not a passing occurrence. According to Skelton, a number of Hindemith’s Jewish friends and colleagues had already been dismissed from their positions,

## 1934

This year was without a doubt the most controversial and ambiguous year so far in Hindemith's life. According to Kater:

Throughout 1933 and the spring of 1934 Hindemith talked about larger musical pedagogical plans not only with representatives of the Hitler Youth, the Reich Education Ministry, the Reich Labour Service, and the German Labour Front but even with functionaries of Rosenberg's *Kampfbund*. These were grandiose visions expressed in heady rhetoric: In one letter, Hindemith spoke not merely of youth but of 'the most wide-spread musical education for the people', eventually to result 'in the musical shaping of millions' (2000: 35).

The first opportunity to assess Hindemith's true position in the Nazi regime was at an orchestral concert in Berlin in February 1934 celebrating the unveiling of the *Reichsmusikkammer*. The programme included compositions by leading members of the inner council of Professional Composers, including Strauss, Pfitzner, Hausegger and Georg Schumann. Hindemith conducted the Berlin Philharmonic in his *Konzertmusik für Streicher und Bläser*, a work that had been written for the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930. In the context of the programme, Hindemith's composition, with its 'astringent harmonies' and 'jazz-inspired rhythms' was a stark contrast to the idiom of the other 'conservative and neo-romantic pieces'. Its reception was mixed, with division of opinion amongst both the audience and the critics. Reviews written by H.H. Stuckenschmidt in the *BZ am Mittag* and by Robert Oboussier in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* were particularly effusive towards Hindemith's music' (Levi 1994: 109).

Even with the cultural climate not being particularly conducive to new experimental works, Hindemith had been thinking about writing an opera about the painter Matthias Grünewald since 1932. He had originally rejected the idea of writing this opera which



Strecker had suggested to him, especially in view of his previous problems with librettists. Hindemith had decided that if he was going to write the opera, he would write the text himself. On 3 August 1933, Hindemith and his wife Gertrud visited Willy Strecker at his home in Wiesbaden to discuss the project.

Hindemith's life became complicated in the months following this meeting with his publisher. Five days after the meeting his brother-in-law Hans Flesch was arrested in Berlin and taken to a concentration camp in Oranienburg. Flesch had moved from the radio station in Frankfurt to Berlin radio in 1928 and had already lost his job in Berlin because of his 'Jewish blood'. His removal was part of Goebbels' plan to gain complete control of the German radio network. Flesch was sentenced on 13 June 1935 to fines and one year's imprisonment for 'corruptly diverting sums of money from licence fees' (Skelton 1975: 113-114).

Flesch was married to Gabriele Rottenberg, the sister of Hindemith's wife Gertrud. Their father was a Jew, Ludwig Rottenberg. Along with the political-musical issues of this time, Hindemith also faced grave problems related to having a 'non-Aryan' wife. At the time the Nazi's were however more worried by the sudden drop in numbers of quality artists and were prepared to make concessions concerning Jewish issues for the time being.

The Nazis were looking for music that was bolder than Romanticism, but not related to 'Jewish' atonal or twelve-tone musical construction. According to Kater the ideal was a 'Hindemith' or a 'Stravinsky', but without the ideological and foreign stigmas attached to their names (1997: 183). This need for music for immediate use,

*Gebrauchsmusik*, was not new. As Hindemith perceived it, he appealed to the great German tradition in which ‘music performed a non-musical, and rather social role’. The way that he attempted to revive the folk element in music in modern terms was sensitive to the demands of modern musical and social developments, and came very close to *völkische* aesthetics in a ‘non-political world’. It seems ironic that Hindemith shared fundamental ideas with Peter Raabe (retired *Generalmusikdirektor* of Aachen and later high ranking official in the *Reichsmusikkammer*) and other Nazi officials, some of whom persecuted him. A number of the people who were part of Rosenberg’s *Kulturgemeinde* were also involved with Goebbels’ *Reichskulturkammer*. Fritz Stein and Havemann were among these people, and it was due largely to their and Furtwängler’s efforts that Hindemith was not ‘openly under attack at this time’ (Skelton 1975: 114).

Unfortunately, Hindemith’s ‘bolshevist approach to composition, impolitic remarks to the press, his Jewish wife, and his failure to please Hitler conspired to earn him a special place on the Nazi blacklist’ (Shirakawa 1992: 180). According to Shirakawa, Göring promptly removed *Mathis der Maler* from the production schedule at the *Staatsoper*. Furtwängler protested vehemently, and Göring informed him that only Hitler could give the approval to perform the opera. Furtwängler was furious that his authority over musical matters was being challenged, and demanded an audience with Hitler. While Furtwängler was waiting for the interview, he programmed the *Mathis der Maler* symphony for a pair of subscription concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic on 11 and 12 February 1934 (1992: 180).



Fritz Stege openly commented on the 12 February concert:

It is a great joy to me, who has never been a friend of Hindemith's music, to acknowledge without reservations the artistic value of this symphony. This work will be greatly admired during the triumphal series of performances throughout Germany, which will assuredly follow (as quoted by Levi 1994: 110).

H.H. Stuckenschmidt viewed the performance of the *Mathis der Maler* symphony as the official sanctioning of modern music in *B.Z. am Mittag* on 13 March 1934: 'The tremendous success contradicts the contention that modern music is *volksfremd*' (as quoted by Meyer 1993: 351). However, Claudia Maurer Zenck goes much further than that when she accuses Hindemith of a conformist role. According to her the *Mathis der Maler* symphony 'conformed very precisely to the official expectations for modern German music in the Third Reich' (as quoted by Kater 1997: 179).

The first negative event after the première of the symphony occurred in March when Hans Rosbaud was refused permission to perform the *Mathis der Maler* symphony on Frankfurt Radio. The reason was apparently because Hindemith had made derogatory remarks concerning Hitler while visiting Switzerland. Until these accusations had been investigated properly, none of Hindemith's works were permitted to be broadcast on radio. Even if the ban was lifted, radio stations would still be required to obtain permission from radio headquarters in Berlin to broadcast anything by Hindemith. According to Skelton, Willy Strecker suspected that possibly Richard Strauss or another one of Hindemith's enemies in the *Reichsmusikkammer* was behind this action (1975: 117). Strecker was especially aware of the implications this would have on the production of the Grünwald opera that Hindemith was working on. He wrote to Hindemith on 28 June 1934:

It shows that our feelings against Berlin were not completely groundless and we should not venture to give the premiere there without definite official permission. Furtwängler seems to be holding his end up splendidly, and we must give him all the support we can (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 118).

The German Chancellor, Paul von Hindenburg, died on 2 August 1934 and Hitler became both Chancellor and President of the Third Reich. Furtwängler continued to plan the Berlin Philharmonic's concert programmes as if nothing had happened, and even arranged for compositions by Mendelssohn to be performed during the season. (Mendelssohn's music had been banned because of his being Jewish). It was around this time that Furtwängler read and was fascinated with the opera that Hindemith was composing. Furtwängler went ahead and programmed it for the new season at the *Staatsoper*. He had been searching for a work to experiment with how far he could push the Nazi's inconsistent policies on music and believed Hindemith's opera to be the perfect goad. Furtwängler did not truly realise at the time how much Hitler hated Hindemith's music.

When Hindemith returned to Berlin for the beginning of the new academic term, he was faced with strong criticism from the Nazi press. The *Deutsche Zeitung* criticised him for allowing the *Mathis der Maler* symphony to be performed at a festival of modern music in Florence, 'which is dominated by Jews' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 119). Herzog distributed a pamphlet and also spoke at a conference on 5 November where he attacked Hindemith and tried to intimidate conductors from performing his work.

Hindemith was furious and paid a visit to Havemann threatening to leave the country if the attacks on him did not come to an end.



Havemann had already put himself out for Hindemith in December 1933 in a letter to Rudolph Hess when the composer was suspected of various anti-Nazi crimes. He had written to Hess that Hindemith was not of the 'same ilk' as 'the Jewish Schönberg and Weill' (as quoted by Kater 1997: 24). Furtwängler and Hindemith came up with a strategy to win Hitler's approval and, in a letter to Willy Strecker on 18 November 1934 Hindemith described their plan:

It is obvious that *Neues vom Tage* shocked the Führer greatly. I shall write him a letter in (F. was very taken with this idea) which I shall ask him to convince himself to the contrary and perhaps visit us some time here in the school, where I would have the cantata from the *Plöner Musiktag* performed for him – no one has ever been able to resist that. F. is to give him my letter, also the text. So you need have no qualms about the outcome of these efforts. It is hardly likely that any very serious attacks will be launched by the other side, unless they just warm up all the old muck again. F. is truly and sincerely and delighted with the text. The very worst that could happen (he thinks) is that he would be advised not to bring the opera out here. He would then arrange for it to be done in a provincial city and at the same time sever his connection with the State Opera, since he cannot tolerate his plans being interfered with from the outside. He says there are no new operas anywhere and no sign of any to come, and this is the one opera he must do. Probably it all looks much more dangerous to you, since all you can do is stand around waiting to see what new event arrives to overtake the previous bad news (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 85-86).

The plan was a complete failure. Furtwängler's article, 'The Hindemith Case', appeared on Sunday 25 November 1934 in the Berlin newspaper *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. Hindemith himself had nothing to do with the writing of the article and had no idea of its contents before it was printed. Willy Strecker wrote to Gertrud immediately after reading the article, 'I think that the article is excellent – as sensible as it is diplomatic' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 121).

The article referred to the success of the *Mathis der Maler* symphony. Furtwängler wrote of Hindemith:

Though he has published nothing else since, attempts are now being made to make up for lost time, to defame him publicly and – for that is what it finally



amounts to – to drive him out of Germany. No means, it seems, are too petty: there are those who are even prepared to hold up against him old burlesques of misunderstood Wagner and Puccini which he once wrote – as if Hindemith did not know who Wagner was! Naturally, with a composer who has written so much and whose works are constantly available in print, it is easy enough to seek out ‘youthful sins’ to hold up against him. Hindemith has never been politically active: what is to become of us if political denunciation is to be applied in the fullest measure to matters of art?’ (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 121).

The editor of the newspaper, Fritz Klein, had informed Furtwängler that the article was a risk to his safety, but Furtwängler instructed him to go ahead and publish it. The first edition sold out instantly and a second printing had to be issued. The article enraged the Nazi’s as Furtwängler compared Hindemith’s controversial musical nature with the venerated composer Richard Strauss. He mentioned the uproar that had accompanied Strauss’s 1909 première of *Salome*, based on the drama by Oscar Wilde. Furtwängler emphasized that both composers were ‘approved’ racially, and both were committed to promulgating German spirit in music. This comparison was akin to the difference between ‘Satan and God’ for the Nazi’s. Furtwängler concluded his article:

It is certain that no one of the younger generation has done more for the international prestige of German music than Paul Hindemith. What is more, it is impossible to predict what importance in the future his work may have. But that is beside the point. We are concerned with more essential matters, and we should clearly understand that there are very few real musicians in the world today, and we cannot afford to deprive ourselves of a man like Hindemith (as quoted by Shirakawa 1992: 183).

In 1935, Furtwängler commented on his defence of Hindemith at the end of the previous year:

When I stood up for Hindemith, I actually did not do so as a demonstration for his art – its ultimate worth still is very much up in the air and his mode of making music far removed from my own. Rather, as a matter of principle, I wanted the public, the nation at large to be provided with an opportunity to pass judgement by themselves (as quoted by Kater 1997: 199).



After the battle had subsided Hindemith wrote to Willy Strecker on 18 December 1934:

Nobody is now probing the wounds, and it seems both to me and most of the others here that everybody is now hoping for a gradual recovery. I think we should just quietly wait. Next season will be early enough for the opera to come out. In any case, through all these events I am so behindhand with my work that I couldn't possibly have had it ready in time (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 123).

The *Hochschule* in Berlin granted Hindemith long leave at the end of 1934, and he and Gertrud moved to Lenzkirch in the Black Forest in order to give Paul time to orchestrate *Mathis der Maler*.

## 1935-1936

Hindemith needed time away from the conflict surrounding *Mathis der Maler* during 1934 and he wanted the space to complete the opera. Hence, he and Gertrud chose a quiet place in the Black Forest for him to complete this work. Hindemith very understandably felt attacked and betrayed by his own country.

It was during this period that he was invited to start a school of music in Ankara, Turkey. He and Gertrud left for Turkey in April 1935. Hindemith had no intention of leaving his position at the Berlin *Hochschule* at this time. He wrote to Willy Strecker: 'I believe that the worst is now behind us' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 128).

They returned to Germany on 16 May 1935, with commissions to employ teachers and musicians from Germany to work at the new school, and money to buy instruments and music for the school library. When Hindemith was back in Berlin he wrote a report for the Turkish authorities on his work in Ankara and gave a copy to Havemann, who ensured Hindemith that it would be passed on to the appropriate Nazi leaders. The orchestration of the opera was finally completed in July 1935. After a few weeks, Goebbels gave the go ahead for *Mathis der Maler* to be staged in Frankfurt. Hindemith then immediately threw himself into composing a viola work, *Der Schwanendreher*, a concerto for viola and small orchestra. In a sense this work is reminiscent of the opera *Mathis der Maler* that was written directly before the concerto and reflects Hindemith's interest in folksong.



There was no longer an official ban on Hindemith's music, but no conductor was inclined to take the risk of premièring a new work by him. Hindemith travelled to Amsterdam and premièred *Der Schwanendreher* on 14 November 1935 with Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and also to London for the English premiere of the concerto in January 1936. The night before the concert was due to take place, King George V died, and the programme had to be changed very quickly.

Hindemith explained the situation in a letter to Willy Strecker on 23 January 1936:

There was great despair at the BBC. Boult and Clark wanted me to take part in the concert at all costs – it was held in the studio, not in Queen's Hall. We debated for hours, but no suitable piece could be found, so we decided that I should write some funeral music myself. As I read yesterday in the newspaper, a studio was cleared for me, copyists were gradually stoked up, and from 11 to 5 I did some fairly hefty mourning. I turned out a nice piece, in the style of *Mathis* and *Schwanendreher* with a Bach chorale at the end (*Vor deinen Thron tret' ich hiermit* – very suitable for kings). It is a tune every child in England knows, though I did not find that out till later. Maybe you know it – they call it 'The Old Hundred' or something like that. We rehearsed it well all yesterday, and in the evening the orchestra played with great devoutness and feeling. It was very moving. Boult was, by English and his own personal standards, quite beside himself, and kept thanking me. My various pupils are now busy writing articles about the affair, they are very proud that the old man can still do things so well and so quickly. [...] Shouldn't we perhaps make use of this story? Would you like to circulate it to the German press? It is after all no everyday occurrence when the BBC gets a foreigner to write a piece on the death of their king and send it out over the complete network. I'm now going to specialise in deceased persons – maybe there will be some more opportunities (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 130).

*Trauermusik* is an example of an occasional composition which long outlived the occasion for which it was written, and has remained one of Hindemith's most frequently performed works.

There were a number of opera houses outside Germany who were willing to stage *Mathis der Maler*, but Hindemith and the Strecker brothers were adamant that the work should first be produced in Germany. The first concert to feature a new composition by Hindemith took place in Baden-Baden in April 1936, which saw the

première of his new sonata for violin and piano in E. Two months later Hindemith returned to Turkey to continue his teaching there. He was approached by representatives of the German Luftwaffe asking if he would be prepared to compose a piece for a 'highly official' concert in the coming autumn. After accepting the commission Hindemith wrote to Willy Strecker on 8 July 1936:

I want to give them something really good. I am quite certain that this piece, if reasonably successful, could mean *Mathis* in the *Staatsoper* ... I have discovered that the English *Trauermusik* had a far greater effect than we knew of at the time. It seems that this was the first blow that started the change of mind about me (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 133).



## 1937-1939

Paul and Gertrud Hindemith again travelled to Turkey in January 1937. His indifferent reception when he returned to Berlin again finally convinced him to give notice of resignation at the *Hochschule* before he left on his first trip to America.

Gertrud wrote to Willy Strecker on 14 March 1937:

You know that Paul never does things over-hastily or on blind impulse, but that all his decisions mature slowly but surely inside him. And why should he let himself be kept in this straitjacket when nobody here wants anything to do with him? [...] I leave him in peace to decide for himself, don't try to persuade him one way or the other: I know exactly what it means to him not to be able to continue working in and for Germany. Poor man! (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 140).

Hindemith added a postscript to this letter: 'All the above confirmed herewith in haste. From autumn on I intend at last to live like a real composer. I shall of course take my leave in sweet accord' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 140).

*Unterweisung im Tonsatz* was published in June 1937 by B. Schott's Söhne. Willy Strecker had predicted that the theory book would cause a sensation, but he wrote to Hindemith a month after it was published, informing him that only five or six copies a day were being sold. This was not really surprising, as German newspapers were not permitted to review it. Schott showed their loyalty to Hindemith by publishing this book without applying for official permission, and decided to just 'wait to see what happens'. The English version which was meant to be published at the same time as the German version was only published in 1942 in America, translated by Arthur Mendel, with the title *The Craft of Musical Composition* (cf. Skelton 1975: 142).

Hindemith's first concert tour of America at the beginning of March began in Washington with a performance of the solo viola sonata from 1922, op.25 no.1. Ernest R. Voigt reported that the audience 'rose as one man and applauded him to the echo. His charming, disarming stage presence immediately won the crowd' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 155). This was a far cry from the negative, unresponsive reception Hindemith had received in Germany over the previous few years.

When Hindemith returned from America at the beginning of May, the same tactical game with the Nazi's was being played. Rosenberg had read the text of *Mathis der Maler* and seemed (in spite of the book-burning scene) to be happy for the staging of the opera to go ahead. He was anxious to arrange a meeting with Hindemith and to inform Hitler of the truth of the quality of the opera. This development occurred as the Strecker brothers, with Hindemith's approval, were discussing plans to produce the opera in Vienna, with Carl Ebert as producer and Furtwängler or Victor de Sabata as conductor. They decided to shelve the project in view of Rosenberg's change of mind to produce it in Germany, and in the meantime Hindemith embarked on his second tour of the United States in early 1938.

When he returned to Europe he was immediately involved in preparation for the premiering of *Mathis der Maler* at the opera house in Zurich and the ballet *Nobilissima Visione* in Monte Carlo. Even Willy Strecker had finally conceded that their hopes of staging *Mathis der Maler* in Germany were no longer feasible. Goebbels had hinted a few months before that he would not object to three private performances in Frankfurt. The political atmosphere in Germany seemed to be completely against Hindemith in every way. During the week of the *Mathis* première



in Zurich, an exhibition opened in Dusseldorf under the title *Entartete Musik*. Hindemith's books and music were prominently displayed. His *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* was in the same cabinet as Schönberg's *Harmonielehre*. The motto of the exhibition was 'Who eats with Jews, dies of it' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 159).

The first performance on 28 May 1938 of *Mathis der Maler* was a huge success. Critics from countries all over the world raved about the work, but not surprisingly there was complete silence from Germany: by official order no mention of the premiere was permitted in the German newspapers.

In view of the dissension surrounding Hindemith's music in Germany, Paul and Gertrud Hindemith made the decision to move to a small Alpine village at Bluschi near Sierre in the canton of Valais in Switzerland. A short time after their arrival Hindemith wrote a letter to Strecker on 20 September 1938, and finally allowed his feelings of bitterness to come forth:

I read in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* a detailed review of the Venice festival, in which my *Visione* is not mentioned at all. That is by current standards hardly surprising – it just proves to me that the decision I have now made was entirely right. A change in the obstinate insistence on a completely idiotic system can hardly be expected any more. There are only two things worth aiming for: good music and a clean conscience, and both of these are now being taken care of. Looked at from this point of view, all our previous efforts were a waste of time – and when I see yet another shit-pants being taken seriously, as happened last year, when it is of no interest to anybody what he says, good or bad, about a work – or even if he ignores it entirely – then I could kick myself retrospectively (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 161).

The third and final sonata for viola and piano was composed amidst the tumultuous upheaval of Hindemith's life, reputation and his scrutiny of his musicianship, just a few months after this letter was written to his publisher. For that reason this piece

should be accorded great significance amongst the composer's sonatas, and as a result it is dealt with extensively in this dissertation. It is important to note, however, that Hindemith continued to perform the earlier two sonatas for viola and piano despite the changes his compositional as well as performing style had undergone in the interim. It is also significant that Hindemith did not compose sonatas for any instrument between 1924-1934. It appears as if he picked up his late 'sonata project' again in 1935, one that was to last him until 1949, with those works for string instruments. The two sonatas for violin and piano (1935 and 1939) were composed in Germany and Switzerland respectively. The first was finished after *Mathis der Maler* and *Der Schwanendreher*, and the second after the Concerto for violin and orchestra. The sonata in E of 1935, completed in his Black Forest chalet was premièred in Genève, on 18 February by Stefan Frenkel and Mme. Orloff. On 6 October of the same year, the Berlin performance by Georg Kulenkampff had political repercussions, and all performances of Hindemith's works were prohibited in Germany. In keeping with Hindemith's usual practise, the violin sonata in C of 1939 was not scheduled, but suddenly came into being as a kind of preliminary study for the Kepler based opera, *Die Harmonie der Welt*. The outbreak of World War II greatly hampered the first performances of this sonata. Hindemith had desperately wanted Isaac Stern to give the first performance of the work, but this was never realised due to the complications of war. The only string sonata not connected to a larger scale work was that for solo viola written during a train journey between New York and Chicago on 19 April 1937. Hindemith premièred it two days later on 21 April in Chicago. The Princeton University Library holds the original manuscript, which is still unpublished. The sonata for viola and piano which is to be the focus of this section was conceived in 1938, as the violinist Mauris Perrin was intent on having a viola sonata by Hindemith



for a performance in Lausanne in January 1939. Hindemith could not complete the work in time, and finally performed it himself, with the pianist Jesùs Maria Sanromà as accompanist, on 23 April in the Town Hall in New York. During the composition of this work Hindemith was engrossed in writing the second book of *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*. This viola sonata, published in 1940, was the first one of the sonata series printed by Associated Music Publishers (AMP) in New York, the representatives of Schott publishers in the USA. Circumstances relating to the war, especially the difficulty of maintaining normal communication channels, made it extremely problematic for the Streckers at Schott in Mainz, to continue publishing Hindemith's works written in America.

A gap of seventeen years separates the 1939 sonata from its predecessor discussed earlier in the chapter. During these seventeen years Hindemith wrote a number of other works for viola, including: sonata for solo viola op.31 no.4 composed in 1923, but only published in 1994; *Kammermusik* Nr.5 op.36 no.4 for viola and large chamber orchestra composed and published in 1927; *Konzertmusik* op.48 for viola and large chamber orchestra composed and published in 1930; Duet for viola and violoncello composed in 1934 and published in 1957; Concerto for viola and reduced orchestra, *Der Schwanendreher* composed in 1935 and published in 1936; *Trauermusik* for solo viola and String Orchestra composed and published in 1936 and the sonata for solo viola mentioned in the previous section.

Hindemith's correspondence is a rich source for evidence regarding performances of his works for viola. Similarly, a great deal of information can be found on the actual composition of some of these works, especially the sonata of 1939. For that reason

the discussion of this work, and those related to it, will rely greatly on extracts from these letters. These extracts also serve to illustrate Hindemith's very active career as a soloist during the decade before 1939 which, in its turn, represents the context in which the sonata was written.

It is important to point out that Hindemith was not only a sought after concert artist but that he was one of the first composers to make gramophone recordings of his own music. His correspondence provides interesting information about this branch of his activities. About one of the first of these recordings Hindemith wrote to Willy Strecker from Hotel Stadt Hamburg, Lübeck on 5 February 1934 (included in this recording was op.25 no.1):

We made a large number of grammophone recordings. The whole of my trio, a Beethoven String Trio, I and Goldberg a Mozart Duo, my solo viola sonata (op.25 no.1), cello sonata as well, and then, because they were one side short, a duo for viola and cello which I wrote in the morning between 5 and 8 before the recording and which we then served up capitally. The recordings were an awful sweat. I played my fingers into blood blisters and even exposed the nerve on one finger, which makes playing particularly pleasant (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 76).

Hindemith wrote his final sonata for viola and piano for himself and a Puerto-Rican pianist, Jesús Maria Sanromà to perform during his third tour of the United States in 1939. Hindemith had made his first visit to the United States in 1937, and his first encounters with Sanromà date from this tour. Of Sanromà he wrote in his diary on 8 April 1937:

The day passed in rehearsals. In the morning with Georges Barrere (flautist) and the pianist Jesús Maria Sanromà from Boston. He is a Puerto Rican; his playing is first-class. Arrived fully practiced and played, apart from a few bars, fully in the spirit of the composer. The two are a wonderful duo; they make the piece more beautiful than it really is (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 100).



These accounts continue into his second visit to the United States, still focusing on the performance of his viola works. In his diary on 25 February 1938 Hindemith wrote about his rehearsal with Sanromà for their performance of op.11 no.4, and also of his intention to play with the Puerto-Rican pianist during his following visit planned in 1939:

Today was a real day of battles. I had arranged with Sanromà to rehearse in the morning. We rehearsed the viola d'amore sonata and the old viola sonata (op.11 no.4) with piano very thoroughly. He is such an astounding musician and as a pianist so splendid technically that it is pure joy to play with him. We have arranged to play together often next year.

After the concert I did some more rehearsing with Sanromà, and once again there was just time to return to the hotel, change and have dinner. One of the violists had promised to pick me up in his car and drive me to Cambridge, where the next concert had been arranged at Harvard University. He came rather too late, for there had been a sudden snowfall and progress could hardly be made through the streets. So we came on the hall patiently waiting. Still, what use would it have been to me if I'd been punctual? Mr Piston was pacing up and down in gloomy despair, shaking his head and muttering repeatedly: 'No Hindemith and no piano'. There was indeed no piano there. I was seized by such a fit of laughter that I had to sit down on the steps for quite a while. It was never discovered exactly why no grand piano had been delivered, apparently no one was to blame. I persuaded the distraught man at least to telephone the piano firm to ask whether one was on its way, and in the meantime I intended to make a start with the solo viola sonata. [...] I then played my viola sonata. Meanwhile it had been established that there was no prospect of a piano arriving. [...] after a lot of palaver I discovered there was another hall to which we could emigrate, though it was only moderately heated. So the numerous members of the audience marched through snow and slush and we continued our concert in reduced circumstances, though with an overplus of pianos (2). We both played finely (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 111-112).

Two days later on 27 February Hindemith mentioned the performance of his *Trauermusik*, op.25 no.1 and op.11 no.4 in a letter to Gertrud:

I journeyed with Sanromà to Newhaven where today's concert was due to take place. I heard a rehearsal in which the pack of apprentices struggled very nobly with a few of my pieces for string orchestra and the Music of Mourning. They played just as school orchestras back home play, and they obviously enjoyed themselves. They started the concert in the evening with these pieces. Then Sanromà and I ascended the platform less modestly and let fly with vigour. I first with the old solo viola sonata, then he coaxed the third sonata out of the piano in a way that made it sound like something, and to end with we reeled off



the piano-violata sonata. The audience went mad! (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 112).

In a letter to Ernest R. Voigt, president of Associated Music Publishers (AMP) in New York who represented Schott in America, Hindemith wrote of his plans for the following year's trip to America and his intention to have composed a new viola and piano sonata by then:

Now to our business affairs. [...] For next year I expect to have the following new pieces for concert use: a concert suite from *Nobilissima Visione*, a viola sonata with piano, a violin or cello concerto, a sonata for bassoon and piano, the enlarged Boepple choruses, a handful of songs, and possibly scenes from Mathis (Hindemith in a letter to Ernest Voigt, 7 June 1938; Skelton 1995: 117).

Hindemith left for his third tour of the United States on 28 January 1939 and wrote to Gertrud on 12 March 1939:

The book on which I have made no progress throughout these weeks on account of the glut of work, has been considerably revised and will be sent off in its final version before I leave here. The additions to the theoretical part I shall probably do on the ship going home. I shall hardly find the time earlier, for I still have to compose the viola sonata for the concert here (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 131).

He had completed the first movement of the sonata for viola and piano before his arrival in America, and worked on the remainder of the work during the tour. The work was completed in time for its première on 19 April at Harvard University with Sanromà, and they performed it a second time on 23 April in the Town Hall, New York, the final concert of the tour.

Hindemith wrote about the composition of the sonata and rehearsal with Sanromà in a letter to Gertrud written on the ship during his voyage back to Europe between 26 April-5 May 1939:



On Monday morning, 17 April I wrote the final note of my Viola Sonata [...] During the afternoon I met with Sanromà in the Symphony Hall and we rehearsed the [...] sonata extensively. It is not an easy piece but we managed to make it stand on its feet quite well during this rehearsal. It is a strong, well nourished piece with lots of spare fat for cold weather. The second movement has a complicated rhythm which one has to approach with caution in order to gain control of it. In the last movement, which consists of two variations on an already self-contained rondo, Sanromà came to understand the meaning and technique of this music after he had pictured it to himself as the musical illustration of a gathering of fleas, mosquitoes and other tickly flying beasts (as quoted by Schubert 1995: 370).

He wrote about the first performance later in the letter. There seem to be some contradictions between Hindemith's reaction to the concert and perhaps the critic of the New York Times on the following day. Excerpts from this article are mentioned later in the section:

The concert was well attended, especially the less expensive seats were all filled – mostly by young people. 'Overwhelming applause swept through the festive atmosphere of the hall' when the composer appeared on stage. The playing was good throughout, the concert a great success indeed. The programme was beautifully structured, only towards the end of the rather long Clarinet Quartet did the listeners tire a little. But especially this last piece was played exceptionally well. I have the records with me on which the entire concert as well as all the verbal introductions and the applause are recorded, so I do not have to say anymore about that. The recordings were made because, apart from today's broadcast, the whole concert will be broadcast again tomorrow on short wave to South America. It seems to have been a noteworthy event for the radio station as well, because I was told later that in the radio review that is regarded as the most authoritative of all, and which rates the importance of events by means of a system of stars – just as it would in the case of *cognac* -, this performance was allotted 4 stars. Such a rating, I was told, has only been given to Greta Garbo before but not to a performance of modern music (as quoted by Schubert 1995: 370).

In a letter to his publisher on 25 September 1939, Hindemith wrote:

[...] I note that I am well on the way to producing some very respectable things. The violin sonata lies complete in the drawer, the final movement is a triple fugue that will make a connoisseur's heart jump for joy. [...] It is amazing that you are bringing the book out in spite of all the difficulties, but I am glad, for I promise myself that it will make a considerable impression in spite of these not exactly encouraging times (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 136-137).

This final concert was sponsored by Associated Music Publishers (AMP) itself, and there had been great hopes that it would be a grand finale to a successful tour. Unfortunately, it proved not to be as well supported as they had hoped for. Hindemith had warned his AMP friends that ‘the only way to fill a hall for a composition concert is by giving away tickets, not selling them’, and he was right. Very few tickets were sold, and complimentary tickets had to be distributed generously to ensure a respectably sized audience. AMP lost money, but refused to accept Hindemith’s offer to return his fee. Hindemith reported that ‘the performances were uniformly excellent [...] but the audience did get a little tired at the end, during the very long quartet’. The programme included the *Kleine Kammermusik* for woodwind quintet, the new sonata for viola and piano, a choral work, Five Songs on Old Texts, a piano sonata for four hands and the quartet for clarinet, violin, cello and piano (Skelton 1995: 132). However, the New York Times critic wrote that after the woodwind quartet ‘the fun was over’. He found the viola sonata ‘sour’, the choral pieces ‘engaging’, the four-hand sonata ‘arid’, and the clarinet quartet ‘juiceless’ and ended his review by posing the question: How can a man who has written so much excellent music write so much dull music? (New York Times 24 April 1939).

Hence, this third tour ended on a rather unsatisfactory note, although on the whole it had been very successful. Hindemith was already making plans to return in 1940, not knowing then that he would actually be coming to live in America.

Hindemith had also made his first recordings in America for Victor Records during the final three weeks of his third tour of *Der Schwanendreher* in Boston with Arthur



Fiedler and a Chamber Orchestra of Boston Symphony players, and *Trauermusik*, the Four-Hand Piano Sonata, and the Sonata for viola and piano in F in New York.

After having had the opportunity to hear part of his own recording of the viola sonata (1939) on his next trip to America, Hindemith wrote to Gertrud on 7 March 1940 about why he had decided to stop performing publicly:

This piece [the 1939 sonata] is played better than the *Trauermusik*. Nevertheless I have definitely decided to stop playing publicly. If my playing is not better than that which can be heard on the gramophone then it is not worth presenting anymore (as quoted by Schubert 1995: 419).

The sonata was first published in 1940 by Associated Music Publishers, New York, a logical step considering that the company were the American representatives for Schott.

This last sonata is not the most popular of the three, mainly because of its technical difficulty and less approachable musical idiom. Much of the work demands heavy-handedness and enormous amounts of stamina, especially for the pianist. The work is therefore not as popular as op.11 no.4 with performers for the reasons mentioned above.

Hindemith's compositions in 1939, aside from the violin concerto commissioned by Mengelberg in Amsterdam, were sonatas. These works covered such a huge range of instruments, including, clarinet, horn, trumpet, harp and viola that Willy Strecker was provoked into comment: 'I am willing as a spur to your imagination, to send you a list of instruments which have perhaps escaped your eagle eye' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 164).

Hindemith's reply reveals that there was nothing artificial in his project of writing solo pieces for all the instruments of the orchestra in turn. He felt that as well as serving to fill in a gap in existing repertoire, 'they also serve as a technical exercise for the great *coup* which I hope to bring off next spring: *Die Harmonie der Welt*' (as quoted by Skelton 1975: 164).



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Hindemith's compositional development between 1919 and 1939 with reference to the sonatas for viola and piano**

The second and final chapter in this dissertation will focus on the development of Hindemith's style and compositional techniques from 1919-1939 with reference to the three sonatas for viola and piano. Mention is also made in this chapter of his other string sonatas composed during this period for the purpose of comparison, in order to provide a more in depth understanding of the context of the viola/piano sonatas under review.

As discussed in the previous chapter these works for viola and piano were composed during, arguably, the most successful compositional, performing and teaching period of Hindemith's life: 1919-1939, as well as the most politically turbulent period. It was during this period, and into the 1940's, that he experimented and explored the possibilities of many other instruments in the sonata genre: this included violin, viola, cello, clarinet, viola d'amore, piano, guitar, alto saxophone, trauteonium, flute, organ, bassoon, oboe, harp, horn, trumpet, English horn, trombone, double-bass and tuba.

Dissension and negative feedback concerning the quality and style of Hindemith's later works in comparison with the spontaneity and inventiveness of his early compositional period has plagued many studies of the composer's music. Discussion in this chapter will highlight stylistic elements from his early to late period with examples and comparisons

from these three sonatas. The relevance of this will become apparent as the characteristics of each of these sonatas are revealed; the first written at the start of his career and the third in the latter but extremely turbulent time at the start of the Second World War. These pieces illustrate each in their own way, Hindemith's emotional, political and musical position in 1919, 1922 and 1939 respectively. Each work is so well written for the viola that one can feel the change in his condition, demands and needs as a performer as well as the external factors alongside this: The almost careless charm of op.11 no.4, the rhythmic and harmonic irony in his 'New Objectivity' emerging in op.25 no.4 and the stubbornness and stoic turgidity of the 1939 sonata. Arnold Whittall compares the quality of Hindemith's early and late works in his book *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century*:

There is less agreement about the quality of his later music, especially the compositions completed after 1940 in America, and about the extent to which his 'even greater stylistic differentiation and refinement of technique' led to dryness of manner and monotony of expression, at least when compared to his earlier achievements. Even David Neumeyer, an advocate who makes consistently high claims, finds 'subtler harmonic-tonal structures' offset by 'poorer chord definition' in the late works, suggesting that, like others, Hindemith had difficulty in sustaining his personal brand of modern classicism at a time when the new, post-war radicalism left his earlier theory and practice seeming dated and, in some ways ill-defined. It is therefore difficult to resist the conclusion that, even if some of those later works have been unfairly neglected, it is in the compositions of the inter-war years that Hindemith was at his best (Whittall 1999: 136).

Hindemith's compositional development during these inter-war years can be identified in two major stages. I have labelled the two stages as 'early' and 'late'. The transition from the 'early' works to the 'late' took place around 1933, coinciding with Hindemith's work on the opera *Mathis der Maler* and the beginning of the Nazi era. The unfortunate and contentious political situation surrounding the composition and first performance of



this opera was discussed in detail in Chapter 1. The ‘early’ stage spans the duration of the Weimar Republic from 1919-1933, perhaps even as early as 1915, and the ‘late’ stage from 1933 onwards. The only reason for hesitating with these dates is because 1919 was the year his works were first accepted for publication by Schott, and although he had composed a large amount of music before this date, it was after his return from military service and changing to the viola alongside his decision to move into composition that signaled the true beginning of his career. I will only be covering the ‘late’ stage until the composition of the sonata for viola and piano in 1939 in this dissertation.

The following description of the unstable political situation resulting in a surge of experimentation in the arts during the Weimar Republic fully supports and reflects the previous comments on Hindemith’s two stages of composition represented in these sonatas. Cultural historian, Peter Gay discussed the connections between Weimar culture and politics in his book *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* in 1974:

This parallel course of Weimar culture and Weimar politics is too obvious to have gone unnoticed. Culture was in continuous, tense interaction with society, an expression and criticism of political realities. [...] The time from November 1918 to 1924, with its revolution, civil war, foreign occupation, political murder, and fantastic inflation, was a time of experimentation in the arts; Expressionism dominated politics as much as painting or the stage. Between 1924 and 1929, when Germany enjoyed fiscal stabilisation, relaxation of political violence, renewed prestige abroad, and widespread prosperity, the arts moved into the phase of ‘Neue Sachlichkeit’ – of objectivity, matter-of-factness, sobriety. And then, between 1929 and 1933, the years of disastrously rising unemployment, government by decree, decay of middle-class parties, and resumption of violence, culture became less the critic than the mirror of events; the newspaper and film-industries ground out right-wing propaganda, the best among architects, novelists, or playwrights were subdued or silent, and the country was inundated by the rising tide of ‘Kitsch’, much of it politically inspired (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 47).



Whittall's comments respond to these times and reiterate the high quality of Hindemith's music during this period:

Hindemith was lucky in the short term, for the cultural atmosphere in post-war Germany favoured brittle, sardonic, parodistic, yet far from superficial creative work, in alignment with the 'linear-contrapuntal' manner of the New Objectivity than other German composers, including Weill adopted. A large proportion of the flood of compositions Hindemith produced between 1918 and 1930 is of high quality (Whittall 1999: 136).

Hindemith was not in a financially stable position as a composer and had not been recognised publicly for his compositional talents when he began on his op.11 project possibly as early as 1915, so in fact he had very little to lose with his often daring and extremely unusual ideas in these pieces. It was this set of sonatas and the string quartet op.10 no.1 that resulted in his elevation and inclusion in the elite group of up and coming composers in Germany. Hindemith's beliefs in music and the direction he intended to follow within music were already clear two years before the beginning of the Weimar Republic, around 1916-1917, even though at this early stage he was not particularly concerned with having his music published, and had not made the decision to definitely move into composition as a career.

As mentioned in the previous chapter Hindemith's lifelong business relationship with Schott was begun as a result of the composer sending the op.11 sonatas and string quartet op.10 no.1 to the firm for publication. Hinton writes that Hindemith became:

[...] practically overnight, both famous and infamous. The division into two periods is obviously a convenient simplification of the facts; it fulfils the useful function of any form of periodisation while also running the risk of grouping together in one period works that are in many ways radically different from one another (Hinton 1989: 107).



Hindemith's intentions concerning music were very clear at this time:

And I just want to make music. It's all the same to me if somebody happens to like it. If it's only true and genuine. [...] I write just as it suits me and whether somebody likes it or not I couldn't care a damn. To be true, genuine – that's the overriding principle (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 116-117).

In many respects this statement is accurate as the op.11 sonatas are representative of Hindemith's complete disregard for tradition in certain respects coupled with his reverence for the 'old masters', alongside his obvious youthful experimentation and individuality in many facets of all six of these works. Absolutely as he intended, each one of these sonatas is totally different from the other in form, although harmonically late-Romantic influences are very much present. They are certainly not without the presence of Hindemith's very unusual and rather eccentric harmonic additions as well, which will hopefully become apparent in this chapter. In order to affirm the previous paragraph concerning Hindemith's general aims, desires and possible influences, I consider it imperative to provide another opinion reiterating this view of his compositional progression.

Alfred Rubeli mentions a chronological order of Hindemith's early works 'from earliest compositions, which in an unforced manner rely on late-Romantic models, through those with impressionist or expressionist influences to those of so-called *Neue Sachlichkeit*' (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 119). It appears as if each of the three sonatas for viola and piano are attached to one of these periods, providing an accurate illustration and cross section of the extremes of the beginnings of Hindemith's creative period right until the onset of his mature style in the middle to late 1930's. There are examples of Hindemith's

very specific directions for the performer throughout all the op.11 sonatas. It will also be mentioned later in the chapter how, in the sonata composed in 1939, Hindemith marked fewer descriptive instructions, but was more specific with tempi and the use of metronome markings.



## Op.11 no.4

The **first sonata for viola and piano op.11 no.4** is an excellent example of one of Hindemith's 'early' works based on 'late-Romantic' models, as mentioned above by Rubeli. According to David Neumeyer in his book, *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, all of the op.11 sonatas reveal Hindemith's 'familiarity with eighteenth-and nineteenth-century sonata literature and his debt to Brahms, Strauss, and Reger, but also to Debussy [...]' (Neumeyer 1986: 115). Neumeyer continues with particular reference to op.11 no.4:

[This sonata] is certainly the most frequently performed of all Hindemith's works for viola and probably the most frequently performed of all his early works, turns round the relationship, the influence of the Quartet and late sonatas of Debussy being paramount. In the opening measures of the *Fantasie* (first movement), in fact, Hindemith's own personality threatens to be subsumed. But we can forgive him easily – these measures are so strikingly beautiful and so perfectly suited to the viola, which is placed in its most sonorous register, with the piano chords below giving a blend of modal yet chromatic flavours strongly reminiscent of passages in Debussy's sonatas for violin and cello. [...] The second [variation] is a whimsical Debussyian Pierrotesque in whole-tone scale figures (Neumeyer 1986: 115).

The harmonic language in this work is a combination of all of the influences mentioned by Rubeli and Neumeyer as well as elements of Hindemith's own rapidly developing individual style. Hinton also comments on external influences on Hindemith during this time, reiterating that the varied idioms and changes in the op.11 set reminds one that the works were composed over a longer period of time:

[...] the appearance of these elements can be 'shocking' inasmuch as in works like the violin sonata op.11 no.1 they coexist with a late-Romantic idiom reminiscent at times of Richard Strauss in an exuberant vein. In the Viola Sonata, op.11 no.4 they are a reminder that the composition of this work as well as the whole op.11 collection was spread over several years (Hinton 1989: 121).

The possible influences of Debussy, Reger, Brahms and Strauss on Hindemith will be touched on briefly, discussing how he would have come into contact with each composer's work and the possible connections evident in his music that followed. Debussy (1862-1918) died on 25 March 1918, only just over a month before Hindemith began composing op.11 no.1. Debussy's most renowned chamber music was composed during the First World War; aside from the string quartet in g minor, this included the sonata for cello and piano (1915); sonata for flute, viola and harp (1915-1916) and the sonata for violin and piano (1917). Hindemith even mentions in an anecdote dated from 25 March 1918 (quoted in Chapter 1) the profound effect the composer's death had on him and his colleagues as they heard the news whilst in the middle of playing the slow movement of the string quartet in g minor. Skelton writes that Hindemith both studied and played the music of living composers such as Debussy, Reger and Strauss when he entered the Hochschule in Frankfurt from 1908 onwards (Skelton 1975:33). Hindemith would have come into contact with Debussy's violin and cello sonatas very soon after their completion, and much of the modal flavour and use of whole tone scales in op.11 no.4 is representative of the writing in these two works of Debussy. Hinton also mentions that the influence of Debussy in Hindemith's pre-1920 works with the 'employment of whole-tone scales and collections has been exhaustively documented by Walter Bruno Hilse' (Hinton 1989: 120). The particular sections in op.11 no.4 with obvious Debussyian characteristics are the opening section of the *Fantasie*, mainly in the modal chords opening the work in the piano and Variations II and IV with the flagrant use of whole tone scales.



The influence of Reger is also present in this first viola/piano sonata, but is perhaps even more obvious in the op.11 no.2 sonata for violin and piano in D. This work was composed between September to November 1918 towards the end of Hindemith's period of military service, and shortly before he wrote op.11 no.4. Familiarity with Reger's compositional style had been part of Hindemith's music education at the Hochschule for at least ten years before these op.11 sonatas were even conceived. Max Reger (1873-1916) died just as Hindemith was beginning the sketches and composition of the op.11 sonatas, and less than a year after he had completed his ninth and final sonata for violin and piano op.139 in C minor. Hindemith's knowledge and awareness of this work is obvious in the op.11 no.2 sonata mentioned earlier in the paragraph, as the openings of the first movements of both works are almost identical in pitch, use of intervals, rhythm and instrumentation. Hindemith also mentioned in a letter to his brother after having discovered Reger's trio for flute, violin and viola op.114a: 'a glorious piece' (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 119).

Hindemith was also acquainted with Reger's three suites for solo viola op.131d, as well as the earlier violin sonatas. There are striking similarities between the characters and aims of the two composers, both stalwarts of old style, but determined to adapt these to their own expressive desires. In the op.11 sonatas this adaptation is clear in Hindemith's experimental use of form, but harmonically and thematically they are all very closely linked with old tradition, namely, late-Romantic models. Guido Barth-Purmann wrote of Reger's music:

Undisturbed, like an erratic block, Reger was on the one hand a passionate defender of old-fashioned ideas such as the classical sonata form, but on the other hand a

composer who in the harmonic structure and spacious melodic design of his works not only unveiled a visionary future where even the educated listener might momentarily lose her or his sense of orientation but also adapted these elements to his personal musical idiom in masterful fashion, pouring old tradition into a new mould (Barth-Purrmann 1998:16).

Much of this could also be applied to Hindemith.

Wirth writes in his article on Reger in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*:

If it is impossible to define Reger's influence, some indication of the importance which subsequent composers have attached to his work may be drawn from the fact that it has been the subject of study by Berg, Hindemith, Honegger, Schmidt and Schönberg (Wirth 1980: 678).

Hindemith also commented on the value he personally placed on Reger's music: 'Max Reger was the last giant in music. I would not be possible at all without him' (Barth-Purrmann 1998:16).

Op.11 no.4 contains elements of Reger's 'linear, eminently instrumental style [...] in combination with the use of sequential writing' (Hinton 1989: 119). This is most clearly evident towards the end of Variation V and VI (bars 81-202) as well as in both opening passages in the exposition and recapitulation (bars 1-16 and 200-216) in the *Finale*.

The string sonatas of Brahms and the violin/piano sonata of Strauss, and especially the former, provided the basis for the form and textural composite on which Hindemith composed op.11. Brahms (1833-1897) died just two years after Hindemith's birth, his three sonatas for violin and piano were composed between 1878-1888; the cello sonatas



between 1862-1886 and the two op.120 works for clarinet/viola and piano in 1894, just the year before Hindemith's birth. The mark of Brahms is perhaps more clearly engraved in op.11 no's 1 and 2 rather than in no.4, as both of these works are structurally, thematically and texturally built with strong connections to the Brahmsian sonata tradition. Op.11 no.4 does however still have strong textural connections with Brahms, although formally Hindemith certainly avoided his predecessors' formulae in this piece.

This information concerning Hindemith's predecessors and contemporaries should serve to enhance the understanding of his music as well as his history and education, but is not intended to undermine or exclude his individuality or creativity. This information therefore does not give a complete picture of Hindemith's style, merely a hint of the origin of his musical language and vocabulary. As mentioned previously, this is especially relevant in op.11 no.4, although it will become clear that in the later two viola/piano sonatas he seems to have returned to a more Brahmsian formal tradition after hastily abandoning it in op.11 no.4.

During February/March 1919, when Hindemith wrote op.11 no.4, his individual experimentation with harmony was already evident alongside his use of new and innovative formal structures. According to the traditional classical-romantic sonata form the first movement of a sonata had become the sonata-form movement. In op.11 no.4 Hindemith turned this tradition upside down by beginning the sonata with a slow, improvisatory first movement, followed by a second movement comprising a theme and four variations, and then without a pause, the exposition of the sonata-form finale with its

two contrasting subjects (bars 1-16 and 53-67). The development is replaced by more variations from the second movement and the appearance of the recapitulation of the finale with another complete variation in the Coda. This draws attention to a number of problems and unusual issues within the form of the sonata. The recapitulation in sonata form is traditionally confined within the borders of a single movement, but Hindemith, along with others before and after him, completely abandoned this idea in this work. The two preceding violin/piano sonatas in the op.11 set all have fairly conventional slow second movements and sonata form movements, so this was quite new for Hindemith. Karl Eschman mentions problems within 'modern' sonata form relevant to the problems and ideas that Hindemith may have had with this particular piece:

The modern sonata presents two important problems which are more fundamental than any questions of nomenclature. First, the problem of reconciling the increased importance of the sonata form, if that is used as the form of one movement, with the multiple form of several movements; and, second, the problem of a recapitulation in the sonata form for a generation which may consider a reprise based upon a strict unity of tonality unnecessary (as quoted by Eschman 1968:141).

This is exemplified in op.11 no.4 by the fact that the *Finale* begins in C sharp minor and ends in E flat minor.

Hindemith's little note at the start of the work is also quite eccentric. As quoted in the previous chapter he clearly instructs the performers to play the work through with absolutely no breaks.



The second and third movements are linked to one another in the nineteenth century cyclic form. According to Charles Rosen, 'Cyclic form was an attempt to open up sonata form, this development took two related directions:

1. The cyclical sonata in which each movement is based on a transformation of the themes of others.
2. The combination of a one-movement and four-movement structure into one amalgam' (Rosen 1988:393)

Op.11 no.4 is an example of both of these forms combined, as the theme from the second movement is transformed in Variation V and VI (in the third movement) as if it was a continuation of the second movement, and the possible three separate movements of the work all follow directly into one another without a break.

Another definition of cyclic form from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* states that:

Music wherein a later movement reintroduces thematic material of an earlier movement is said to be 'cyclic form'. In its strict meaning such music returns at its end point whence it set out at the beginning [...] Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt and Franck elevated cyclic principles to great importance, associated with the widespread application of Thematic Transformation and the desire for greater continuity between separate movements, all methods of establishing a tighter cohesion in multi-movement forms. Since the nineteenth century cyclic form has been adopted as a regular stock-in-trade of musical structure (MacDonald 1998:112).

This relates to the return of the folksong theme from the start of the second movement at Variation VII (Coda) in the same key. The quote gives the impression that the use of cyclic form since the nineteenth century was not that unusual, perhaps shedding light on

Hindemith's use of this form as not being particularly innovative. In the context of his predecessors using this form more or less within the confines of the sonata this certainly was innovative, although many nineteenth century composers had used this concept in other compositional genres.

The tonal structure in this work is quite clear, though not completely traditional, and falls more or less within the confines of diatonicism. Hindemith also makes use of key signatures throughout most of op.11 no.4, although Variation II, V and VI are without. This use of key signatures indicates the existence of a central 'diatonic' key, and not merely a 'tonal centre' as was generally the case in his later works. The appearance of a rather unusual key signature in Variation IV of F and G sharp emphasizes the whole tone scale in the piano part, but with hindsight turns out to be a transition to the key of C sharp minor in the third movement by means of the Phrygian mode on C sharp.

None of the movements actually finish in the key they started in. The first begins in F and ends in D, with the viola moving to an A sharp for the transition to the second movement which starts in E flat minor and ends with no fixed tonal centre and the third starts in C sharp minor and ends in E flat minor.

The first movement *Fantasie - Ruhig* begins in F major, as indicated by the key signature, modulates to a number of related and chromatic keys before ending in D, only a semitone lower than the theme of the next movement in the key of E flat minor. The first movement begins with simple chords in the piano with an elegiac and tender melody in



the viola. The G and D-string writing, illustrated here in the next example immediately reveals the inner warmth of the middle register of the viola.

**Ex.1 bars 1-5**

Bratsche

Ruhig

Klavier

*p*

*pp*

*riten.*

*ppp*

*pp*

The second entry of the theme at bar 10, an augmented 4<sup>th</sup> above the first is accompanied by Debussyian shimmering arpeggiated chords in the right hand of the piano, taken over by the viola a few bars later in a more virtuosic manner.

**Ex.2 bars 10-11**

1

*mf*

*p*

*3*

The opening section of this *Fantasie* ends at bar 16 in a whirlwind sound of the triple *fff* C major chord with tumbling scale patterns in the viola winding to a *pp* close with the remains of C major still in the air.

Ex.3 bar 16

The musical score for Ex.3 bar 16 is written for piano. It consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below it. The top staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and contains a long, continuous melodic line with many sixteenth notes. A bracket labeled "Cadenza" spans the middle of this staff. The grand staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and contains a complex, rhythmic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic marking. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be common time.



The *pp* fluttering continues at bar 17 in the viola while the piano takes over the melody,

#### Ex.4 bars 17-19



This is followed a few bars later by the viola returning to the original pitch from the start of the movement, a mere octave higher.

#### Ex.5 bars 19-22



The tonal flavour is different however, and the start in D minor instead of F major feels less comfortable. The dynamic marking is different from the beginning, *mf* for the start and then a continuous *crescendo* launching the ‘development’ section with two segments of the theme in the piano moving downwards chromatically with florid interruptions in the viola. A *stretti* passage begins at bar 27 in the viola with a *p* version of the theme appearing on E flat in both instruments one quaver apart, a whole tone below the original entry on F. The second attempt is marked *mf* with runs of *accelerando* demisemiquavers leading to a climax of *fff* and a triumphant return to tonal centre of F at bar 32 with the

theme. This unusually structured movement draws to a peaceful and extremely quiet close. Bars 38-40 added later in the compositional process to link the cyclic form, discussed in Chapter 1, do fit comfortably within the mood and key objectives in this position.

**Ex.6 bars 27-33. The *stretti* passage starting on E flat building to the climax and return to tonal centre of F**

The musical score for Ex.6, bars 27-33, is a complex, dense passage for piano. It is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and features a complex, dense texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The score is divided into three systems. The first system starts with a treble clef and a bass clef, with a key signature change to one flat. It includes markings like *p un poco accel.*, *p*, *treiben*, *trem.*, *cresc.*, and *mf*. The second system continues the dense texture with markings like *mf*, *sempre accel.*, *trem.*, *cresc.*, and *mf*. The third system shows a transition with markings like *cresc.*, *rit.*, *ff (im alten Zeitmaß)*, and *Breit*. A circled '3' is above a measure, and a circled '5' is below a measure. The score ends with a circled 'RETURN TO F'.



The table below shows the keys and structure of the first movement of the sonata.

| SECTION | LENGTH  | TONAL CENTRE            | BARS  |
|---------|---------|-------------------------|-------|
| A       | 16 bars | F /B/ C major           | 1-16  |
| B       | 25 bars | E minor/D minor-D major | 17-41 |

The second movement is marked *Thema mit Variationen - Ruhig und einfach, wie ein Volkslied*, a theme and four variations. The theme and first variation are both in the key of E flat minor; the second variation has no key signature as it is based largely on whole-tone scale configurations; the third variation begins in E flat major (with the key signature of that key) developing into a complex chromatic variation and variation four has an unusual key signature, with only F and G sharp in the Phrygian mode on C sharp.

Hindemith marked two time signatures at the start of the theme in the second movement, a technique he had utilised in the slow movement of op.11 no.2 implying the free interchange of these in this section.

The 35 bar long 'folksong' introduces the main thematic material used in the seven variations spread out throughout the second and third movements. The simple folk melody is presented in a chorale-like fashion. The free change of time signatures gives an unaffected lilt and improvised feel to the phrase lengths.

**Ex.7 bars 1-6 of the Theme**

## II Thema mit Variationen

Ruhig und einfach, wie ein Volkslied



Variation I is a combination of a gentle and meandering reminder of elements from the quaver theme from the first movement and a slower moving harmonic rhythm from the Theme of the second movement. Hindemith again very consistently maintains the same key signature and changes the time signature to 6/8. It is clear there was a long period of time between finishing Variation I and starting Variation II, although thematically it is closely linked, musically it is very different from the first movement and the Theme and Variation I.

**Ex.8 bars 34-40**



Variation II is in 2/4 and there is no key signature, but it is based on a structure of whole tone figurations throughout. The folk theme is back, here taking on a playful and dramatic character. The diversity between the gentle and *pesante* character of this melody is exaggerated. For the first and only time in the op.11 sonatas Hindemith notated the piano part over three staves in this variation.

**Ex.9 bars 66-71**

Variation III is an agitated version of the theme, characterised mainly by running figures in the piano writing with long arching phrases in the viola. It begins in E flat major (with key signature) developing into a complex chromatic variation with elements of thematic material from the theme, but no direct or complete entries.

Hindemith again marks a time signature for the linked third to the start of Variation IV and a rather strange key signature mentioned earlier in the chapter. The note from the composer at the bottom of the page of the variation reads as follows: ‘The sharps that stand here are F and G, not as usual F and C sharp’. It implies the Phrygian mode on C sharp in this 9 bar variation. The folksong theme is in the viola, syncopated above a descending whole tone progression of four notes in double octaves in the piano. This

variation ends in a tumultuous crescendo, launching directly into the start of the C sharp minor third movement.

**Ex.10 bars 139-141, beginning of Variation IV**

VAR. IV noch lebhafter

THEME

fff

ff

f

The table below illustrates the tonal and formal structure of the second movement

| SECTION       | LENGTH  | TONAL CENTRE  | BARs    |
|---------------|---------|---|---------|
| THEME         | 33 bars | E flat minor  | 1-33    |
| VARIATION I   | 32 bars | E flat minor  | 34-65   |
| VARIATION II  | 47 bars | Use of whole-tone scale configurations                | 66-112  |
| VARIATION III | 25 bars | E flat tonal centre                                   | 113-138 |
| VARIATION IV  | 9 bars  | F and G sharp key signature. Phrygian mode on C sharp | 139-147 |

The third movement is marked *Finale (mit Variationen)*. This movement is harmonically strongly linked to the second movement as it ends in E flat minor, the tonic key of the second movement. Variation V and VI appear instead of the development in this sonata-form movement. This is the only sonata in the op.11 series where Hindemith uses a theme and variations, and an extremely rare example of the conclusion of a set of variations within the context of another movement. This extraordinary design was integral to his initial intention for op.11, as confirmed in his letter to Emmy Ronnefeldt



dated 28 September while he was still at the front in 1918: 'I want to write a whole series of these sonatinas. [...] Each one is to be totally different in character from the one before, in form too' (as quoted by Skelton 1995: 22). Although this does not give any specifics concerning the design he intended to use it does reiterate his intentions to experiment. This portion of a letter quoted in chapter 1 has been repeated in order to draw attention to Hindemith's intention to experiment with form in the op.11 works.

Proof of this experimentation certainly exists in each of these pieces as they are constructed differently. Op.11 no.1 is in two independent movements, a fast first and slightly slower sarabande-like second movement; op.11 no.2 is in three independent movements, a fast-slow-fast linked to a quicker end section; op.11 no.3 like no.1 has two movements, fast and slow-fast and op.11 no.5, four independent movements, fast-slow-fast-fast, op.11 no.6 fast-slow-fast.

The main theme in the exposition of the third movement is combined with elements from themes of the first and second into a defiant and agitated motif. The opening *recitativo* bars for solo viola establish the impetuous character of the exposition (bars 1-80) and recapitulation (bars 200-247) sections.

**Ex.11 bars 1-5 of *Finale***

**III**  
**Finale (mit Variationen)**

**Sehr lebhaft (Alla breve) In wechselnder Taktart**

The musical score for the Finale (mit Variationen) is presented in two staves. The top staff is for the violin, and the bottom staff is for the piano. The tempo is marked 'Sehr lebhaft (Alla breve)' and the meter is 'In wechselnder Taktart'. The piano part begins with a forte fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic. The violin part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.



Hindemith announces the entries of the theme in unison with viola and piano (bars 1-2) to reiterate the rising crotchet figure followed by the two-quaver motif, then each time leaves the viola on its own to announce the more improvisatory quaver phrase with greater freedom.

**Ex.12 bars 10-17**

The musical score for Ex.12 (bars 10-17) is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 10-11) features a unison passage marked 'Breit' and 'ff' (fortissimo), with a circled '14' above the staff. The second system (bars 12-17) includes a section marked '(keine Sextole)' (no sextoles) and 'f' (forte), followed by a section marked 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'f' (forte). The score is written for piano and viola, with the piano part in the upper staves and the viola part in the lower staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The unison passages (bars 11-16) serve to solidify and affirm the accents in all the sections marked *Breit*. A beautiful ethereal softer and slower section before the crescendo lends a totally different perspective to this theme.

Ex.13 bars 23-44

SOFTER AND SLOWER SECTION

The musical score for Ex.13 (bars 23-44) is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 23-32) features a violin part starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, marked with a circled 15, and a piano part with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic, marked with a circled 15. The piano part includes markings for *kurz* (short) and *f* (forte). The second system (bars 33-44) continues the piano part with a *poco* (a little) marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic. The violin part includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piano part features a prominent crotchet and quaver motif. The violin part features a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs.

We are then thrown back into a huge unison, this time with both instruments playing the crotchets and quaver motif of the theme together.

The first entrance of the second subject or theme appears from bar 52-80 in C sharp minor, in the form of a gentle and lyrical melody interwoven between the two



instruments. It is in total contrast to the more defiant nature of the first subject. The second subject appears in the recapitulation (bars 225-247) in the key E flat minor with almost identical material to the first appearance.

Key signatures, as mentioned previously, are not present in Variation V and VI, but appear in all other sections of the movement. Variation V, used as the development section of the movement, starts as a gentle and reassuring reminder of the theme from the second movement, ending in a tumultuous *crescendo* and *accelerando*.

**Ex.14 end of Variation V, bars 120-130**

*Crescendo at end of Variation V leading into VI*

The musical score for the end of Variation V, bars 120-130, is presented in two systems. The first system is marked 'Sehr lebhaft' and 'sempre accel.' in both staves. The second system starts with a circled '21' and is marked 'Breit, immer mehr beruhigen' and 'ff'. It includes markings for 'tenuto', 'rubato', and 'ff'.

The Exposition (bars 1-80) is in C sharp minor (with key signature). This is followed by Variation V (bars 81-135) beginning in the key of A flat major followed by Variation VI which leads directly into the recapitulation beginning in the second movement key of E flat minor. Variation VI (bars 139-199) is marked *Fugato, mit bizarrer Plumpheit vorzutragen*, consisting mainly of three-voice chromatic counterpoint throughout and is

based on the folksong theme from the second movement. Another important characteristic of this sonata, and also the other works belonging to the op.11 series are Hindemith's directions to the performer, not just at the beginning of each movement, but throughout to indicate character and tempo changes. This direction at the beginning of Variation VI is one of Hindemith's more characterful indications, instructing the performer to 'perform with a bizarre clumsiness'. His exaggerated directions were known at times to annoy performers, for example in the op.10 no.1 string quartet Hindemith's direction at the *Fugato* in the first movement reads 'To play with total apathy'. The next example is a table of all of the fugato entries from Variation VI, showing clearly how Hindemith worked his way back to the dominant key of B flat, before returning to E flat minor for the start of the recapitulation.

| BAR NUMBERS | INSTRUMENT | NOTE    |
|-------------|------------|---------|
| 136         | VIOLA      | G SHARP |
| 146         | PIANO      | E       |
| 160         | PIANO      | G SHARP |
| 173         | PIANO      | A       |
| 176         | PIANO      | F       |
| 182         | PIANO      | D SHARP |
| 185         | PIANO      | B FLAT  |
| 189         | VIOLA      | C       |
| 190         | PIANO      | E       |
| 194         | VIOLA      | B FLAT  |



The next example shows the transition from Variation VI into the recapitulation, revealing Hindemith's method of transition from one section to another as well as his process of modulation to another key. These pathways of modulation lead to some of the most significant harmonic observations, as they reveal Hindemith's control of transitional processes and hence his ability to sustain musical continuity without unnecessary interruptions. It is particularly reassuring to observe Hindemith's final chord ending Variation VI on the dominant of E flat minor, the original key from the start of the second movement, and the key the work ends in.

#### Ex.15 End of Variation VI and start of recapitulation

The image displays a musical score for Ex.15, which covers the transition from the end of Variation VI to the beginning of the recapitulation. The score is written for violin and piano. The first system shows the concluding measures of Variation VI, with a final chord circled and labeled "B flat" (referring to B-flat major, the dominant of E-flat minor). The second system, titled "Im Hauptzeitmaß (ohne Taktart)", marks the start of the recapitulation. The piano part begins with a circled chord labeled "TONIC OF E flat minor". The violin part includes markings for "arco p" (arco piano) and "cresc." (crescendo).

Also notable, are the beginnings of his rather alternative technique of composing the recapitulation in a different key to the exposition, in this case a tone higher (later referred to as upper leading tone). This tonal structure is evident in both of the later viola/piano sonatas. All his compositional details appear more or less unconscious and unplanned in much of op.11 no.4, in comparison with how structured and controlled the later works

became. Most obviously, the 1939 work appears tightly manufactured in its tonal planning, with many of the characteristics from this earlier work evident, but so much more cohesively organised. Perhaps, this tonal structure in op.11 no.4 is Hindemith's attempt to unify cyclic form, bringing the recapitulation of the sonata form third movement back to the key of the theme of the second, ready for the Coda. Together with the thematic recurrences concerned this could be seen as the reason for the instruction to play the two movements without a break between them. This table shows the structure and key divisions of the third movement.

| SECTION                                       | LENGTH   | TONAL CENTRE              | BARS    |
|---|----------|---------------------------|---------|
| EXPOSITION (A)                                | 80 bars  | C sharp minor             | 1-80    |
| VARIATION V<br>AND VI<br>(DEVELOPMENT<br>(B)) | 119 bars | Starts in A flat<br>major | 81-199  |
| RECAPITULATION<br>(A)                         | 101 bars | E flat minor              | 200-301 |
| VARIATION VII<br>AND CODA (B)                 | 90 bars  | E flat minor              | 302-392 |

Hindemith's use of a gradual progression through a number of keys, for instance with each movement being in a different key throughout a work, was also a characteristic he used in other sonatas from the op.11 set. For example op.11 no.3 starts in E flat and ends in C sharp and op.11 no.5 begins in C, moves to C sharp and returns to C in the fourth movement. It is noteworthy that the remaining sonatas in the set all begin and end in the same key, for example op.11 no.1 and.2 start and finish in their initial keys of E flat and D respectively. Op.11 no.4 starts in F, moves to E flat minor, C sharp minor and back to E flat in the Coda.



In the following section Hinton quotes Hindemith's confession that his music before 1921 was underdeveloped as he was not technically in control of what he was doing, and continues by commenting on how Hindemith's music during this very 'early' stage was not much more than an eclectic collection of various styles. Op.11 no.4 appears, for all its idiosyncrasies discussed in this chapter, to be the most coherent, and therefore one of the most convincing examples of Hindemith's early style, even though obvious elements from other composers are used together with his own unique ideas.

It is perhaps useful to look ahead to Hindemith's *Craft of Musical Composition, Volume I* with reference to op.11 no.4. Crucial to analysing all three of these sonatas for viola and piano is an informed understanding of Hindemith's compositional development before and after he wrote this important treatise explaining his theoretical ideas. A discussion of Hindemith's later style without knowledge of his theory would not make sense, and the existence of elements from his theory in his earlier compositions also provides a logical explanation as to how his later style developed.

Hindemith intended his book, published in 1937, to present a theory by means of which music of all periods could be explained. His most important aim was to replace existing tonal theories with an approach that would account for the free use of all twelve notes of the chromatic scale and to define the order and degree relationships of each of these to a central keynote. He wrote:

Every octave will be filled out in the same way as every other, so all that is needed is the scale pattern for one octave. To a given tone, the tone an octave higher stands in so close a relationship that one can hardly maintain a distinction between the two. The tone which is only a fifth higher than the given tone is the next most

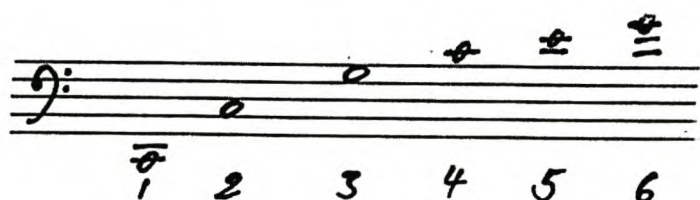
closely related, and there follow in order the fourth, the major sixth, the major third, the minor third and so on. As the distance from the given tone increases in this series, the relationship diminishes, until, in the tones that at the interval of the augmented fourth or diminished fifth, it can hardly be felt at all. If one follows the overtone series up from any given fundamental, the closest relationship will be found between tones 1 and 2, 2 and 3, and 3 and 4, in the familiar order. But if one follows this series further, one will find a series of relationships wholly at odds with the experience of musical practice: tones related to the fundamental tone as 4:5 (major third), 5:6 (minor third), 6:7 (under-size third), 7:8 (over-size whole tone), and 8:9 (large whole tone) would be the next most closely related tones after the fourth. The significant order in which the twelve tones of the chromatic scale made their appearance, in diminishing degree of relationship to the given tone, Series 1 (Hindemith 1937:54-56).

In this example the octave C-c is used: **Ex.16 Series 1**



Hindemith compiled Series 1 through a mathematical process of dividing the vibration numbers by the overtone numbers of the preceding notes in the series. Notes 1-6 of the overtone series (comprising the octave, fifth, fourth, and major and minor thirds), with their higher octaves outline the extended major triad.

**Ex.17 Notes 1-6 of the overtone series**





The value of the relationships established in Series 1 are the basis for understanding the connection of notes and chords, ordering of harmonic progressions and the tonal structure of compositions. Hindemith develops Series 1 even further:

The individual tone is not music until it is directly connected with other tones, and tonal relations are not operative until tones and tonal combinations are in motion. Music arises from the combined effect of at least two tones. The Interval is formed by the connection of two tones, and is the basic unit of musical construction (Hindemith 1937:57).

Series 2, derived from Series 1 and a comparison of combination tones, shows the relative harmonic force of intervals and the relative melodic force of intervals. The strongest intervals from both directions become the principal tonal functions: tonic, dominant, subdominant and the two leading notes (Neumeyer 1986:33). The twelve notes of the chromatic scale are again the material for Series 2, but their significance is completely different from that in Series 1. Series 2 is used to evaluate the distances between the various notes, and not the relationship of each note to the progenitor.

#### Ex.18 Series 2



In *The Craft of Musical Composition Volume 1* Series 1 and 2 control the harmonic, rhythmic, melodic and structural processes through a hierarchical system based on the twelve chromatic pitches.

The method of analysis used in this dissertation is modelled on Hindemith's analysis of the Prelude from his *Mathis der Maler* Symphony. The complete analysis as shown on pages 220-222 in *The Craft of Musical Composition Volume 1* is divided into seven layers. In the following examples the harmonic relations are indicated by the addition of the symbols for the non-chord notes. By eliminating the latter, the harmonic fluctuation and the degree-progression are calculated. In the degree-progressions, the guide-tones are included in such a manner that the step from the root of a tritone free chord to the guide-note, and vice-versa, is indicated with a line leading from one to another.

For the purposes of this dissertation I am assuming that the reader is familiar with Hindemith's method and my aim is merely to provide examples from the sonatas under discussion. It may be useful for the reader to refer to these specific sections of *The Craft of Musical Composition Vol.1* – p113-121 (Harmonic Fluctuation and Movement in Chord-Connection, Expressed in Root Progressions), p142-148 (Larger Harmonic Relations – Degree Progression), p164-175 (Non-Chord Tones), p183-187 (Melody Degree-Progression) and p193-197 (Step-Progression).

The seven layers of Hindemith's analysis are as follows:

**Section A - Melodic Analysis of Upper Voice**  
**Degree-Progression**  
**Step-progression**

**Section B - Two-voice framework**  
**Fluctuation**  
**Degree-progression**  
**Tonality**



Awareness of the workings of the seven layers of Hindemith's analytical method is important when studying these three works. It sheds a different light on much of the harmonic simplicity of op.11 no.4. The following example shows bars 1-5 of op.11 no.4, analysed according to the seven layer analysis mentioned above. There is an underlying whole tone set underneath the notes of bar 3-4 in the step-progression of this analysis. It is fascinating how the content and appearance of the analysis changes as the later works are analysed according to these same principles. Far more complex chords and more intricate fluctuations are apparent. Hopefully these examples suffice to demonstrate the evolution in Hindemith's use of harmony through this twenty-year period.

Ex.19

**Ruhig**

The musical score for Ex.19 is divided into two main sections. The first section is a piano introduction marked **Ruhig** (Calm). It consists of two staves: a treble staff with a melody and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment. The melody begins with a series of notes (D, W, D, W) and includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, and *ppp*. A *riten.* (ritardando) marking is present in the middle of the introduction. The second section, labeled **A**, contains six variations of a musical theme, numbered 1 through 6. Each variation is written on a single staff. Variation 1 is in treble clef, while variations 2 through 6 are in bass clef. The variations show different rhythmic and melodic treatments of the same material, with some including specific fingering or articulation marks like *q±* and *b±*. Variation 4 includes Roman numeral chord symbols: *I*, *I*<sup>1</sup>, *I*, *I*, *I*, *I*<sup>2</sup>, *I*<sup>1</sup>, *I*, *I*. The key signature for all variations is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 6/8.



The following examples from op.11 no.4 illustrate elements from the complete analysis in the work. I have chosen the beginnings of sections and those passages with varied harmonic content to assist with illustrating the apparent complexity or simplicity of much of the work. This should provide a guideline and act as a basis for studying the following two works. The obvious harmonic complexity of especially the 1939 Sonata is so much clearer with the references from the earlier works as a basis. Even though Hindemith had not even conceived *The Craft of Musical Composition Volume 1* in 1919, the origins of his harmonic principles and theoretical foundations can be observed in this work.

Example 20 shows the extremely smooth and strong harmonic content in the opening of the work, while Ex.21 shows a slightly less smooth harmonic fluctuation in the opening of the second movement as well as chords with tritone (The chord symbols in this and similar examples refer to the ‘Table of Chord Groups’ as found in Hindemith’s *Craft of Musical Composition*).

#### Ex.20

**Ruhig**

The musical score for Example 20 is in 6/8 time and features a piano (p) and pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The tempo is marked 'Ruhig' (Calm). The score includes a 'riten.' (ritardando) marking. Below the staff, there are handwritten chord symbols: I, I, I, I, II, II, I<sub>2</sub>, I, I, I.

Ex.21

Ruhig und einfach, wie ein Volkslied

*Handwritten Roman numeral sequence below the piano part:*  
 I<sup>2</sup> IV I III I I III I I<sup>2</sup>



## Op.25 no.4

Although the previous section on op.11 no.4 is by no means definitive or complete it serves as a basis for understanding the context and change that occurred in the **second sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4**. The following, written by the composer himself, indicates how Hindemith felt about his earlier works as he moved into another stage of compositional development at the start of the 1920's:

Between my earlier things and the present ones there is only a gradual, not any essential difference. I couldn't write like this before because I was technically (and personally) still too underdeveloped. [...] In the 'Whitman-Hymnen' (op.14) I have almost succeeded in capturing what all the time has been going through my head. But they still rely heavily on all sorts of antiquated devices. [...] A one-act opera, *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* – text by Kokoschka is on the same level. A series of piano pieces (op.15) are much better, and in my new quartet (op.16) and above all in the new songs (op.18) I have achieved for the first time what I always wanted but was never quite able (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 117).

In a sense Hindemith is almost trying to dismiss his earlier works as being reliant on 'antiquated devices' and 'technically underdeveloped' but contradicts himself by mentioning that there is not any 'essential difference' between his present the previous and present works. Op.11 no.4 does not really fit into this category, although looking at the two early op.11 violin/piano sonatas one could say that form and some harmonic devices are slightly 'antiquated', as characterful as the pieces are.

This quote does however put into context how Hindemith was feeling about his earlier works during the transition to his 'New Objectivity' in the early 1920's, and reveals the composer's critical comparison of these earlier pieces, paving the way for the changes in op.25.



Hinton criticizes Hindemith's earlier works although he argues that each new work has a fresh approach with a 'colourfully mixed palette of style', affirming that perhaps Hindemith's desire for youthful experimentation was the saving grace of the op.11 sonatas. He implies that the lack of direction in the works seems to represent Hindemith's insecurity with his vocation as a composer, perhaps unfounded, or maybe accurately represented until his op.11 and op.10 no.1 had been published and his future secured. These comments could almost as easily apply to much of the material in op.25.

Taken as a whole his early output reveals at best unbounded energy, skill and adaptability in diverse idioms, whether chamber, orchestral, vocal or instrumental. At worst, it represents a lack of direction, a deep-seated insecurity in respect of his vocation as a composer. Most works were composed at speed and are impressive in their apparent sureness of touch. As a stage in a process of maturing and development each work stands as the product of Hindemith's assimilating heterogeneous sources, and seems to contradict the possibility of being regarded as a link in the chain of logical development. Rather than ask compositional questions which find answers and solutions in a later work, or represent technical problems the posing and resolution of which imply the foundation of an identifiable musical language, each work seems to mark a fresh approach. And each new approach contains a colourfully mixed palette of styles which themselves coexist without glaring contradiction. If Hindemith speaks a musical language supported by a philosophy which Ian Kemp calls 'international', then any grammatical errors are obscured by the confidence, however superficial, of enunciation and delivery (Hinton 1989: 118).

Ernst Hermann Meyer, who studied with Hindemith for a brief period at the beginning of the 1930's gave his comment on the composer's 'early' and 'late' style in 1979:

I always admired the boldness and strength of his early works, although I was sorry that later on he became so neutral, even in his expressive means so curiously non-committal. The hardness, sharpness and decisiveness of his early works are no longer contained in such measure in Mathis and other later works, something I always greatly regret (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 108-109).

And on Hindemith's early instrumental chamber music in general, and the viola sonata op.25 no.4 in particular, Hinton adds:



[...] in the main it upholds the practice of formal construction, it adheres to some sort of large-scale architecture. Often, however, energetic instrumental gestures, torrents of rapid ostinati and sequences threaten to upset the balance, to gain the upper hand by appearing as outbursts of virtuoso spontaneity. In the sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4, composed in 1922, the large-scale form of the first movement, for example, could not be clearer and simpler – ABAB, whereby A is vigorous and tempestuous, and B is more lyrical (the incessant pounding of the crotchet beat briefly subsides). Yet the ostinati and sequences from which it is all constructed give the impression of being improvised [...] (Hinton 1989: 185).

**Ex.22** is of bars 58-67 from first movement of op.25 no.4 demonstrating ‘the incessant pounding of the crotchet beat’ in the left hand of the piano and ‘vigorous and tempestuous’ characteristics of A as described above by Hinton.

INCESSANT POUNDING OF CROTCHETT IN LEFT HAND 7

**Ex.23 Bars 68-79 from the first movement of op.25 no.4 illustrating the more lyrical character of B.**



This work could not be more different to its predecessor; there is none of the fresh and spontaneous charm of op.11 no.4, but a rather stiff and defiant neo-classical character evident in the outer two movements. This rather rigid unrelenting character is diffused with a magically tender middle movement.

Op.25 no.4 was composed in June and November 1922, just over three years after op.11 no.4 and one year after the string quartet op.22 no.3 had been completed. It appears that the sonata for solo cello op.25 no.3, written in July, only a few months before op.25 no.4 was, according to Neumeyer, successful in all facets, so much so that Hindemith included it in his list of 'approved works' in the first edition of *The Craft of Musical Composition, Volume I*.



Neumeyer writes of the solo cello sonata:

[...] a perfect synthesis of competing stylistic and technical claim. It blends features of traditional tonal or modal harmony with the careful, dense motivic development of the late romantics and Viennese expressionists, and with the anti-romantic irony, raucous unconcern for pretty colours, and objective formalism which characterises Hindemith's New Objective music from 1923 onwards. The difference in stylistic and technical consistency between the sonata and its contemporaries – the *Kleine Kammermusik op.24 no.2*, the '1922' Suite op.26, and even *Mareinleben* – is striking (Neumeyer 1986: 123).

The form ABAB, at least in the first movement of op.25 no.4 is far simpler than in the corresponding movement in op.11 no.4. All the sections in both outer movements are clearly compartmentalised, none of the seamless delicacy or subtlety of the former work. Very much like baroque music, everything seems to come to an abrupt halt and without warning move into the next section or dynamic. In this example from the first movement of the later sonata, the first bars of each section (ABAB) and the transition into the following section are shown in order to illustrate the 'tonal centre', as well as the abrupt and almost terraced dynamics and transitions. Unlike much of op.11, this work is not liberally scattered with *crescendos/diminuendos*, although the extreme dynamics are still present. The contrapuntal style of the writing also lends itself to this 'neo-classical' interpretation.

Hinton continues to discuss the first movement of op.25 no.4 in more detail:

At bar 80, by way of introducing ripples into the tranquillity of the B section, the piano sets in motion two ostinato figures, a short-three note figure in the left hand and a longer eight-note figure in the right hand, which are repeated eighteen and eight times respectively. Then, at bar 94, another ostinato figure is established in the piano, repeated in all six times. The viola also follows with an ostinato of twelve quavers repeated seven times, which then becomes reduced to four quavers and so forth until the opening A section starts up with slight variation. Traces of the composer's hand thus appear partly erased; the central importance of the

composer's work and of the work of art itself have been, as it were, de-emphasised in favour of bringing the role of the performer to the fore.

This was nothing new. It was also the idea behind the composition of fantasias in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century – to create the illusion of spontaneity. Hindemith's achievement, which was acknowledged and warmly acclaimed by his contemporaries, was to reintroduce that spontaneity, whether illusory or not, into the composition of sonatas and concerted chamber music against the background of a tradition of romantic autonomy (Hinton 1989: 186).

**Ex.24** As discussed previously by Hinton, this next example shows bars 80-88 in the first movement of op.25 no.4.

80

ppp EIGHT NOTE FIG

ppp THREE NOTE FIG

83

86

espr.

p

f

R



This work is different to its predecessor, not only in form and character. Unlike the former, there is a complete absence of a key signature. This certainly does not mean that there are no tonal centres. The first movement begins on C and ends on D. An integral facet of Hindemith's style in this sonata is the replacement of a sense of key by an orientation towards a tonal centre. The former would still apply to op.11 no.4, while the latter is firmly in place in op.25 no.4. On the other hand he used a more conservative formal structure throughout op.25 no.4. In the following example, the use of 'intervals' or vertical harmony consisting of only two different notes, rather than chords based on three or more notes, creates a thin and linear harmonic structure. This interpretation of the lack of harmonic content in much of this first movement is only assumed as such according to Hindemith's own theory. This harmonic usage is evident in both outer movements of this sonata, and is representative of the harmonic style of the sonata as a whole.

#### Ex.25

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, labeled 'Ex.25'. The score is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'd.' (allegretto). The key signature is natural (no sharps or flats). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Handwritten annotations in blue ink are present: 'OCT' (Octave) above the first measure, '5th' (Fifth) above the second measure, '4th' (Fourth) above the third measure, and 'Tritone' (Tritone) above the fourth measure. The dynamics are marked 'f' (forte) at the beginning and 'p' (piano) at the end. The score is followed by a line of text: 'no harmonic fluctuation, only intervals are present'.

Op.25 no.4 reveals Hindemith's increased flexibility and confidence in dealing with traditional forms and tonal relationships, having left behind the influences of Debussy, Reger and Strauss. His individuality and the development of his own style are now more apparent. Nevertheless, Whittall comments that Hindemith was not always able to maintain a 'flexible tonal language' whilst using 'traditional forms'. He argues that Hindemith's monotony and lack of flexibility that became so obvious in many of his later works is evident in some of the music of the 1920's already, almost suggesting that Hindemith took himself too seriously during this time. Whittall cites the string quartet op.22 no.3, composed in December 1921, only a few months before op.25 no.4, as an example:

With hindsight it is all too easy to diagnose the symptoms of later disease: but even in the immediate context of the early 1920's this quartet shows that Hindemith could not always sustain the ideal balance between a desire to exploit traditional forms and the employment of a flexible tonal musical language involving a high degree of chromaticism. The more serious the intention, the less successful the result (Whittall 1999: 13).

In many respects the second sonata for viola and piano under discussion in this section does fall into the same trap with its solid form, driving rhythms and effective dynamic changes, but lacking in beauty and spontaneity. The first movement, *Sehr lebhaft Markiert und kraftvoll* is a juxtaposition of energetic neo-classical shapes and less successful lyrical sections, of which the former became characteristic of Hindemith's 'New Objectivity' from 1923 onwards. The sonata for solo viola op.25 no.1 composed in 1922, like op.25 no.4, also reveals Hindemith's use of 'special devices to replace the tonal framework for harmonic orientation: mottoes, (chord, figure, or short progression) ostinatos, or prolongations of dissonant sonorities' (Neumeyer 1986: 121). Neumeyer



argues that Hindemith used these devices as the principal means of definition throughout the five movements of op.25 no.1. According to him there is a 'three-chord motto in the first movement; a two bar progression with careful definition in the second movement; a chord in the third; an obvious ostinato in the fourth; and a recurrent progression with bass-register in the fifth' (Neumeyer 1986: 121). In op.25 no.4 Hindemith uses the 'neo-classical' shapes' as the 'mottoes' throughout the first and last movements. The first movement is unified by two four-bar motives treated in different ways during each of the energetic sections identified as A. These will be discussed in detail later in the section.

Kostka wrote concerning another characteristic of Hindemith's style which is more obviously apparent in the 1939 sonata for viola and piano than in this earlier work. This is, his organisation of all sections and tonal progression around the focal point of the cadence, in Kostka's words: 'to reserve the pure sound of a triad for important cadences or for the end of a movement' (Kostka 1990:50). This characteristic is perhaps even more obvious in the 1939 sonata than in the previous two works Neumeyer also comments on the importance and use of the cadence by Hindemith:

Hindemith attached great importance to the cadence as the point at which the harmony and melody within a phrase or period intersect with the structural forces of tonality and form. His concept of cadence, however, is not a revival of the old notion of point of rest. To Hindemith, the cadence is first of all a force of binding, joining melodic activity firmly to the harmonic-tonal basis, and harmonic-tonal patterns to the formal structure. Any of the eleven non-tonic degrees may be used as the penultimate degrees in a cadence, though differing levels of harmonic strength result (Neumeyer 1986: 44).

In this context the following quote from *The Craft of Musical Composition* concerning cadences seems appropriate, and is of special significance to the sonata for viola and piano op.25 no.4, as well as the later work from 1939:

According to a view widely held, larger harmonic developments are simply extended cadences. This is inaccurate insofar as it ignores the fact that, as we have seen, the structural tendency towards an ending in a cadence subordinates all other factors to it, while in other harmonic developments what sought is the free unfolding of rhythm, melody, and harmony. But one thing such free developments do have in common with cadences: the roots of their chords must exhibit tonal coherence if the chord-successions which take place above them are to be understandable (Hindemith 1937: 143).

Different examples of Hindemith's use of cadences are present at the end of each of the movements of this work. The final chord of the first movement is a D minor chord in the piano at bar 179 that changes to a D major chord played pizzicato by the viola at bars 181 and 182.

#### Ex.26

Handwritten annotations in the score include "pizz." and "pp" above the Viola staff at bar 181, and "D minor" and "D major" written below the Piano and Cello/Double Bass staves respectively, indicating the harmonic change from D minor to D major.

13

The two A sections in this first movement, although similar in character and material, are quite differently developed and orchestrated. The first A section is begun with the piano



on C at bar 1 and the second with the viola also on C at bar 111. The first A section is 67 bars in length in comparison to only 40 in the second. The chords in the right hand from the opening piano solo at the start of the movement are heard in the viola with a drone open C string at the recapitulation (A2). Although changing the exact nature of the original intervals, the content and dryness of the writing is maintained. The off beat crotchet chords in the left hand of the piano at bar 111 accompanied by a rising sequence in the right hand gives a more restless feel than at the start of the movement (A1). The duet role between the two instruments is more equally shared in the first A section, with accompanying and melody roles continuously being reversed, whereas in A2 this melodic material only appears in the viola. The start of the second A section at bar 111 is shown in the next example. The opening of the first A section was shown in Ex.25.

**Ex.27**

*A (start of second section)*

THREE NOTE FIGURE

The B sections (bars 67-110 and 150-181) are far more similar throughout in the viola. Both occasions when this material appears, the melody is in the viola, although in the first section the piano does have a seven bar solo in the middle with related material. This solo does not appear in B2. The piano part in both sections is quite different, giving a changed feel from the first to second appearance. The first is so much more fluent,

facilitated by moving quavers much of the way through. The next two examples are from B1 and 2, illustrating the change in the piano part.

**Ex.28 bars 80-82, B1**

**Ex.29 bars 162-166, B2**

This table shows the tonal and formal structure of the first movement.

| SECTION | LENGTH  | TONAL CENTRE | BARS    |
|---------|---------|--------------|---------|
| A1      | 67 bars | D            | 1-67    |
| B1      | 43 bars | D            | 67-110  |
| A2      | 40 bars | D            | 111-150 |
| B2      | 31 bars | D            | 150-181 |

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that the main reason this viola/piano sonata was not published immediately was because op.11 no.5 as well as op.25 no.1 had both been



published extremely close to one another. It is thought that Schott did not want another viola sonata out so soon, thinking that it might hamper the sale of the others if they were available in such quick succession. On the other hand, perhaps Hindemith, contrary to what has just been mentioned, was not completely satisfied with the work, and therefore did not push its publication. As discussed in Chapter 1 the sonata was not published until 1977, almost fifty-five years after its completion.

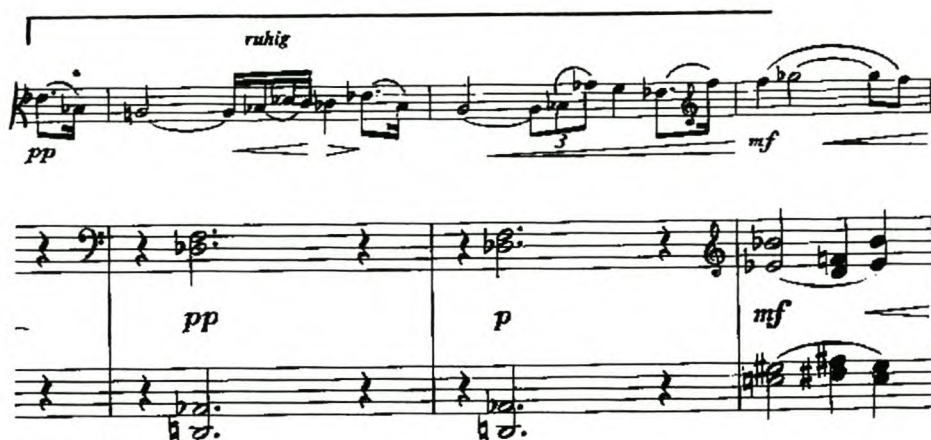
The second movement, *Sehr langsame Viertel* is in three main sections: A, B and A, with a short Coda. It appears as if there are motives rather than themes being used again. The main thematic material of the movement is made up of shorter, more independent ideas, clearly segregated into non-changing roles in each instrument. The opening two and a half bar motive occurs five times in the movement in the piano only, at bars 1, 6, 23, 28 and 34. All of these entries are at exactly the same pitch, rhythm etc, although the instrumentation differs from one to the next. Three out of the five are solo piano, and two in conjunction with a *crescendo* with the viola. This idea does exhibit elements of bi-tonality. These are explained in more detail later in the section.

**Ex.30 bars 1-3, Motive 1**



The second motive is only in the viola (with mute) and is five bars in length. There are three appearances, at bar 3, 25 and 31, the last entrance starting on a B flat instead of the previous two both on an E flat.

**Ex.31 bars 25-28, Motive 2**



The structure and keys of the movement are shown in the table below.

| SECTION | LENGTH  | TONAL CENTRE | BARS  |
|---------|---------|--------------|-------|
| A       | 8 bars  | E/E flat     | 1-8   |
| B       | 14 bars | B/E flat     | 9-22  |
| A       | 8 bars  | E/E flat     | 23-31 |
| CODA    | 8 bars  | E/E flat     | 31-38 |

Neumeyer sees this movement as an excellent example of the ‘New Objectivity’ in Hindemith’s music from this period:

The New Objectivity was frankly antiromantic, a rejection of pre-World War expressionism and an affirmation of a new urban culture – society as a city-machine. The New Objective composers substituted linear, kinetic energy and deliberate formal constructivism for the nineteenth century’s psychological development (motivic working and endless melody), functional harmony, and sensuous orchestral timbres. To counteract the self-serious subjectivism of the expressionists in particular, the music of the twenties was brittle, witty, sometimes



vulgar, and often politically engaged. Even music using expressionistic techniques was more 'spatial' than emotional, resulting in a 'constructed subjectivism'. Excellent examples in Hindemith's work are the slow movement of the Sonata for Viola and Piano op.25 no.4, and the Passion Songs from *Das Marienleben*, "*Vor der Passion*" and "*Pietà*". These pieces, all from 1922, combine pure form with intensity in much the same way as the early Bauhaus paintings of Klee and Kandinsky (Neumeier 1986: 13).

This 'constructed subjectivism' can be seen in the somewhat neutral or detached character of the piano part employed to accompany a surprisingly tender and expressive viola melody. There is a constant tension building until a climax is reached in bar 19. The remainder of the movement almost mirrors the first half, and finishes pensively. Like the first movement, the second has no key signature. Although the overall tonal centre can be said to be E flat (minor), the piano accompaniment exhibits moments of bitonality. An example is the opening figure where the right hand part in E flat is set against a left hand part suggesting E. The final chord at bar 38 ends with a triad, E flat minor, a semitone higher than the previous movement, which ended on D.

The third movement, marked *Finale. Lebhaftes Viertel*, is divided (by double-bar lines) into three parts (ABA) of rather unequal length. This first table illustrates only the skeleton of the structure, and not the complex interweaving of material throughout the movement. The second table at the bottom of the page provides a clearer picture of the complex order of entry of the material, illustrating the second A section (bars 105-148) beginning with B section material. This reverse order of returning material is another technique that was to become a trademark of his compositional style, especially in the later sonatas. This is discussed in detail with reference to the 1939 sonata.

| SECTION     | LENGTH | BARS    |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| <b>A</b>    | 68     | 1-68    |
| <b>B</b>    | 36     | 69-104  |
| <b>A</b>    | 44     | 105-148 |
| <b>CODA</b> | 26     | 149-174 |

These in turn are subdivided into various thematic sections in a quite complex way.

| SECTION     | LENGTH  | TONAL CENTRE               | BARS    |
|-------------|---------|----------------------------|---------|
| <b>A</b>    | 36 bars | unclear                    | 1-36    |
| <b>B</b>    | 32 bars | A/E                        | 36-68   |
| <b>C</b>    | 36 bars | E/F/F sharp/E/D<br>flat    | 69-104  |
| <b>B</b>    | 33 bars | B/C sharp/E flat/D<br>flat | 105-138 |
| <b>A</b>    | 10 bars | A/D flat                   | 139-148 |
| <b>CODA</b> | 25 bars | B/E                        | 149-174 |

A tonal centre in the first A section is difficult to define, mainly because the two instruments function so independently of one another that as soon as one can almost identify a tonal centre at the end of the driving rhythmic motive in the viola from bars 1-7, the piano enters with yet another motto in a completely different tonal centre and with totally different material. The character of the A section material is not unlike that in the A section from the first movement, with its repetitive nature and rapidly changing dynamics throughout. There appear to be three different thematic ideas at work in this section.



Ex.32 bars 1-3, Motive 1 in the viola

III. Finale. Lebhaftes Viertel  
ohne Dämpfer

ff p

Ex.33 bars 5-12, Motive 2 starting in bar 8 in the piano, with motive 1 still sounding above in the viola.

MOTIVE 1

5 p ff p

MOTIVE 2

MOTIVE 1

9 3 ff mf

**Ex. 34 bars 14-16, Motive 3 in the piano with motive 1 continuing above in the viola.**

Unlike the motives in the second movement, these are not confined to appearance by only one instrument, but move continuously between the two. Although no tonal centre as such is discernible in the opening 36 bars of this movement, another more contrapuntal thematic device is used. The following section illustrates the entries of both motives 1, 2 and 3 not directly one after another, but interspersed and juxtaposed between the viola and piano. There is not a particular pattern, but a more equal role play between the instruments, and a general sense of returning (in motive 1) to the same start note at the end of the section (bar 31). The first entry of motive 1 at bar 1 in the viola is on a C flat and the second entry in the viola at bar 16 starts on a D flat (the remaining entries are in the table below), there does not appear to be a pattern developing here. Motive 2 begins in the piano at bar 8 on G flat followed by the viola at bar 21 on an F, a semitone lower. There does not appear to be any pattern developing between the motive 3 entries.



Table of motive 1 entries.

| Bar Number | Instrument | Start Note |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 1          | viola      | C flat     |
| 16         | viola      | D flat     |
| 18         | viola      | D          |
| 21         | piano      | E flat     |
| 22         | piano      | B flat     |
| 31         | viola      | C flat     |

This table isolates the almost chromatic movement through the section, the tonal journey of motive 1 through the A section, as well as Hindemith's consistency with returning to the original start note at the end of the section.

Motive 2 entries are not quite as dramatically linked, but all begin on F, G flat or G, not unlike numerous occasions mentioned previously in this chapter, where small sections such as this one as well as whole structures, are built around a tone.

Hindemith appears to be attempting an ambitious dual scheme in this sonata, firstly a conflict between a gradual progression towards E through C, D and E flat in the first and second movements respectively; and also a more general process of clarifying tonality out of atonality and bitonality. He uses a very similar process in the third string quartet op.22 mentioned earlier in the discussion of this sonata. The quartet is in five movements

and has a main tonal centre of F sharp, which is only really established in the *Finale*. Hindemith also works his way through to F sharp via C sharp and C.

A2 is only 10 bars in length (bars 139-148). Here both motives 1 and 2 are heard together in a slightly different formation from A1. The piano has the first motive beginning on an E flat, while the viola carries the second idea for most of the 10 bars, starting on an A. Motive 1 does appear in B1 from bars 51-59 in the viola on the original start note of C flat in the accompanying role. Motives 1 and 2 also appear briefly towards the end of the Coda, unifying the movement and building chromatically.

The B section is far simpler in its construction, with only one motive in the viola, accompanied by contrapuntal movement in the piano.



**Ex.35 Start of the B section (bars 37-43) with lyrical idea in the viola accompanied by related contrapuntal material in the piano.**

The idea moves to the piano at bar 51 when the viola interrupts with motive 1 from A1. The thematic material in this B section is more lyrical than in section A, characterised by long horizontal lines and a melody filled with fourths. B2 starts at bar 104, a tone higher than the first entrance of this theme. The entries of the melody are again all initially in the viola (from bars 104-123), starting on B and moving to F sharp at bar 119. *Stretti* entries of segments of this motive follow from bar 123 overlapping at a crotchet starting in the piano on C. This serves to build up tension and urgency as the music moves towards a climax at bar 148.

**Ex.36 Stretti entries in B2.**

The musical score for Ex.36 shows three systems of staves. The top staff is a single melodic line starting at bar 125, marked with dynamics *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *f*, and *ff*. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment. The middle staff has dynamics *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, and *ff*. The bottom staff has dynamics *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, and *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and articulation marks.

Table of Stretti entries from bar 123-128

| Bar Number | Instrument | Start Note |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 123        | piano      | C          |
| 123        | viola      | F          |
| 124        | piano      | C          |
| 125        | viola      | F          |
| 126        | piano      | G          |
| 126        | viola      | C          |
| 127        | piano      | G          |
| 127        | viola      | C          |

The C section (bars 69-104) consists of two ideas, a sinister and rhythmically driven motive 1 only in the viola, and a second motive in the piano, more lyrical and melodic with rhythmic and repetitive characteristics derived from motives 1, 2 and 3 in section A.



**Ex.37 Start of the C section with menacing line in viola with macabre piano melody.**

69 *Dieser Teil ist durchweg  
sehr leise zu spielen*

*pp mit Verschiebung* *mp*

The third movement, like the previous two, does not have a key signature. B2, beginning at bar 105, starts a tone higher than the first entry of the second subject at bar 36 of the exposition. The recapitulation (B2), instead of starting with the first subject, is introduced by the second subject.

## **Sonata for viola and piano without opus number (1939)**

In Hindemith's later sonatas from the mid-1930's, it became clear that the tonal schemes of many of these works were focused around the upper or lower leading tones, or one could say, within the parameters of a 'tone' in some cases. It is clear that even as early as 1919 and 1922 Hindemith was thinking tonally in a similar direction. Just to review the tonal outline of the two works already discussed in this chapter; op.11 no.4 starts in F and ends in E flat, while op.25 no.4, as mentioned earlier in the chapter starts in C, with the first movement ending in D, moves to E/E flat in the second movement and finally ends in E in the third. The tonal scheme evident in these earlier two works does not necessarily highlight a pattern, but is an indication of his tonal thinking, planning and relation, even during this early experimental stage of his compositional career. His tonal schemes are used in a far more advanced and subtle way in the later sonatas.

It was in 1939, seventeen years after the composition of op.25 no.4, when Hindemith wrote his third and final sonata for viola and piano. He had long since been ousted from musical life in Germany, had retreated from the select avant-garde group of German composers to modern classicism, and had returned in some respects to 'diatonic tonality' and 'explicitly traditional forms' when he wrote his last sonata for viola and piano (Whittall 1999: 141).

Some of these changes had begun to take root in 1927, contributing to and coinciding with drastic changes in the composer's style. There were three specific reasons for



Hindemith's style taking a different route at this time: In October 1926 Hindemith had met Fritz Jöde, one of the leading figures of the youth movement, which had led to Hindemith placing his 'talents at the service of that movement'. In 1927 the move of the Donaueschingen Festival to Baden-Baden brought about an accompanying change of musical activities' and on 1 May 1927 Hindemith started his new position as Professor of Composition at the Berlin *Hochschule*, therefore 'confirming his interest in pedagogical matters' (Hinton 1989: 190).

These different influences and his desire to broaden his horizons for the sake of the music, as well as external political and social issues brought the onset of a transition in his compositional development.

In this sense it is significant that Whittall views the changes in style and character of Hindemith's music as a 'response' to political events in Germany in the late 1920's. He writes:

It might seem naïve to relate Hindemith's retreat from the vitality and abrasiveness of his early style to a response to the political disaster which afflicted Germany at the end of the 1920's. Yet there can be no doubting the affiliation between the social and political instability of the post-war, pre-Hitler period and the at times aggressive, at times morbidly languid music of Hindemith, Weill, and others. Culture and society were very much of a piece in the Weimar Republic, and Hindemith's later music exhibits all the symptoms of an attempt to exalt Apollo and resist Dionysus: to provide, whether intentionally or not, a spiritual antidote to the poison of fascism. In these terms, that music fails when it seems too negative, avoiding issues, going through the motions. It is certainly no mere matter of a retreat from the avant-garde to modern classicism, with a return to diatonic tonality and explicitly traditional forms. What is lacking in many of Hindemith's later works is not only the fundamental tensions of a modernist aesthetic, but also the urgent eloquence of the best modern classicism, such as *Mathis der Maler* has in abundance (Whittall 1999: 141).



In a similar vein Hinton assesses Hindemith's position in the Weimar Republic style during the 1920's, with reference to his *Gebrauchsmusik*:

It has to be stressed that the *Gebrauchsmusik* works are not mere parerga, they are central to Hindemith's general artistic philosophy, to the evolution of his distinctive musical language and to his music theory. Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik* had up to now been what Hans Mersmann defined as that 'which covers the needs of the music-festivals and, in addition, those of large concerts', a certain kind of music the ultimate significance of which rests in its finite nature'. The music festival had been the central performing context of his first six *Kammermusiken* as well as much of his other music. With the works written for his own use, Hindemith had epitomised the Republic's new 'Musikertypus' (Hinton 1989: 190-191).

Further evidence from the composer himself is apparent in an essay written in 1930:

*Forderungen an den Laien*. Hindemith states unequivocally that:

[...] one will always have to differentiate between two contrasting forms of music-making: playing to an audience and playing for oneself. The former is the profession of the musician, the latter is an activity for the amateur. Both forms are of equal importance for the development of music (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 200).

Ian Kemp also commented on the connection between Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik* and his personal style:

[...] the relative simplicity of his amateur music is in no way a capitulation to the demands of musical egalitarianism (as was frequently suggested), but rather an important step in the evolution of a new style (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 213).

In the same article he continued with a variation on this idea:

Hindemith objectifies his introversion (after Mathis) and spent the rest of his career consolidating the musical aspects of the language he had fashioned, while raising to the level of a principle the initially pragmatic aims of his amateur music (Hinton 1989: 213).

An unpublished lecture given in Buffalo in April 1940 is one of the only documented instances of Hindemith discussing the concept of *Gebrauchsmusik* (aside from the brief



mentions in his writings of the 1920's). Hindemith did not deny the importance that the term had in the 1920's, or his involvement:

I must admit that I do not feel completely uninvolved whenever the word 'Gebrauchsmusik' sounds out. I think back to the time about 15 years ago when one began in Europe to recognise that there was no normal or healthy path to be seen in the unceasing development of concertante and especially symphonic forms, neither for music itself nor for the musician (as quoted by Hinton 1989: 112).

In between composing op.25 no.4 and the sonata for viola and piano in 1939, as mentioned previously, Hindemith did not compose any sonatas between 1924-1934, but before the final viola sonata he did write works of this genre for other instruments:

| COMBINATION                       | DATE OF COMPOSITION              | DATE OF PUBLICATION |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Sonata for solo viola op.31 no.4  | Completed 23 August 1923         | 1994                |
| Sonata for solo violin op.31 no.1 | March – April 1924               | 1924                |
| Sonata for solo violin op.31 no.2 | April 1924                       | 1924                |
| Sonata for violin and piano in E  | Completed in 1935                | 1935                |
| Sonata for piano in A             | Completed 29 January 1936        | 1936                |
| Sonata for piano in G             | Completed 5 July 1936            | 1936                |
| Sonata for piano in B flat        | Completed 1 August 1936          | 1936                |
| Sonata for flute and piano        | December 1936                    | 1937                |
| Sonata for solo viola             | 20-21 April 1937                 | unpublished         |
| Sonata for organ no.1             | June 1937                        | 1937                |
| Sonata for organ no.2             | June – July 1937                 | 1937                |
| Sonata for bassoon and piano      | January and June 1938            | 1939                |
| Sonata for oboe and piano         | June 1938                        | 1939                |
| Sonata for piano, four hands      | August – September 1938          | 1939                |
| Sonata for violin and piano       | Completed 1939                   | 1940                |
| <b>SONATA FOR VIOLA AND PIANO</b> | <b>JULY 1938 – 13 APRIL 1939</b> | <b>1940</b>         |

Looking at an overall view of the tonal structure of these sonatas, a clear development can be identified. The next few paragraphs will focus on the tonal outline of a number of these works in order to provide a context for the structure of the **sonata for viola and piano composed in 1939**. The first sonata for organ listed in the table above written in 1937, like op.11 no.4 and op.25 no.4, is an example of a tonal scheme based around upper and lower leading tones, the former constructed around lower and the latter, upper leading tones. The second, and final movement of this organ sonata is divided into three clear sections emphasizing the leading tones. The work is in two movements and the tonal structure is as follows: E flat, E/E flat. The tonal scheme of the second movement is shown in the table below.

|         |                     |                  |                     |
|---------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Section | <i>Sehr langsam</i> | <i>phantasie</i> | <i>ruhig bewegt</i> |
| Key     | E-E                 | D                | E flat-E flat       |

The second section of the first movement of this work shows the upper leading tone emphasized.

|         |                       |                 |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Section | <i>mässig schnell</i> | <i>lebhaft</i>  |
| Key     | E flat-G              | E flat-E-E flat |

In the third organ sonata (1940) the tonal centres are in close proximity to one another. Like the first movement of the first organ sonata mentioned above, the upper leading tone is emphasized, this time across the whole work.

|          |          |    |        |
|----------|----------|----|--------|
| Movement | I        | II | III    |
| Key      | A flat-B | A  | A flat |



The second organ sonata composed in 1937 does not, like the other two end on the initial tonal centre. It has three movements: E, E and A. In sketches from the first movement, there is evidence that the work may have been originally intended to start at the present bar 99, in A.

The three sonatas from 1938 include a sonata for bassoon, oboe and piano duet with fairly similar tonal designs. The sonatas for oboe and bassoon and piano each have two movements, with the tonal structure of each as follows: G and E/G and B flat and D/B flat.

The sonata for viola and piano composed in 1939 starts and ends in the same ‘tonal centre’, in keeping with the other works of this genre from the same year. Hindemith composed a sonata for clarinet, alto horn, two pianos and violin/piano, as well as the viola/piano sonata in 1939. The clarinet and two-piano sonata both have tonal relationships very similar to that of the viola/piano sonata, the main tonal centre primarily featuring in all movements of both works. The tonal structure of these late sonatas indicates very little change in Hindemith’s method of unifying movements via maintaining a ‘tonal centre’ throughout a work and leads me to suggest that his use of tonal structuring is even more conservative than in the previous sonata, op.25 no.4. In this earlier work, the tonal structure is built around three upper leading tones.

|          |     |          |     |
|----------|-----|----------|-----|
| Movement | I   | II       | III |
| Key      | C-D | E-E flat | E   |

In the 1939 sonata Hindemith had refined this technique even more, the outer two movements are built primarily around the ‘tonal centre’ of F.

|          |   |        |     |       |
|----------|---|--------|-----|-------|
| Movement | I | II     | III | IV    |
| Key      | F | B flat | E   | F-B-F |

This work appears to be part of Hindemith’s increasingly conservative development throughout the 1930’s, present primarily within his use of form. This development was encouraged by his more perfunctory and matter-of-fact approach to the compositional process, brought on by the sheer necessity of fulfilling requirements and commissions. This ongoing adjustment to a more conservative formal style and usage must also have been brought on by his wanting his music to be suitable for scrutiny according to the rules and ethos of *The Craft of Musical Composition*. Even though Hindemith did intend his theory to provide a basis for understanding not just his own music, but all music, it seems as if its presence may have confined his own compositional process merely through its existence as a model representing himself. On the other hand it is also possible that Hindemith may have been making use of what La Rue described as ‘Expanded tonality’ in his *Guidelines for Style Analysis*. La Rue refers to a composer’s extension of harmonic resources in order to increase descriptive colour. He describes how often these ‘expansions occurred so quickly that no grammar or syntax could be evolved to furnish a structural framework, resulting in the break down of a unified tonality. The tradition of beginning and ending a work in the same key shows that many composers continued to sense a basic tonality, even in the face of radical experimentation’ (La Rue 1970: 53-4).



In areas other than tonality and form, Hindemith's development of themes, use of thick textures and instrumentation, rhythmic variety and greater imaginative use of the viola are hugely advanced from the op.25 no.4 sonata. The first movement themes in this 1939 work are equally developed and managed between the viola and piano, through rhythmic augmentation, shifts in tonal centre, sequential imitation and incessant, driving rhythms in a manner and style that was not present in either of the previous sonatas. Gone are the terraced dynamics of op.25 no.4, or the presence of small sections of simply inspired ideas, but not particularly belonging anywhere, that are found in op.11 no.4. Everything in this final viola/piano sonata is meticulously planned and accounted for.

This is also the first of the three sonatas for viola and piano in which Hindemith gives metronome indications at the beginning of each movement, as well as quite drastic tempo changes within movements. For example the indication at the top of the second movement, *Sehr lebhaft* is 144 to the crotchet. This is nearly impossible to perform at this tempo! It is possible that Hindemith decided to categorically indicate tempi with a metronome because of continuous questions from students and performers studying his works, or, confusion as to the tempo actually intended with reference to the inscription at the start of each section or movement. He may even have heard his compositions performed inaccurately. I have to admit that his own recording of this work certainly very stringently adheres to these metronome markings. He is just as particular and consistent with the rest of the work; I - *Breit, mit Kraft* – crotchet = 92, III - *Phantasie* – crotchet = 40-120, IV – *Finale (mit Zwei Variationen)* - crotchet = 96, *Ein wenig langsamer* – crotchet = 84, *Sehr lebhaft* – crotchet = 120. This is yet another indication

of his attempt at greater control and accountability over every aspect of his compositional process.

Harmonically this work is the most progressive of the viola/piano sonatas, although the overall tonal structure, mentioned previously is rather conservative. This is especially noticeable when comparing it to other works of the same genre composed during this period, as was discussed earlier in the section. The overall tonal structure seems even more conservative when one looks at the adventurousness of the tonal schemes of both op.11 no.4 and op.25 no.4. Considering the advanced harmonic, thematic and rhythmic material in this work, the outer shell, both formally and tonally, could appear regressive.

The tonal centre of the first movement is F, and again there is no key signature. This movement integrates elements of sonata form into an arch-like structure where the recapitulation reverses the order in which the two main subjects appear. (This is a procedure that was followed by Béla Bartók quite frequently, eg. in his 5<sup>th</sup> String Quartet.) The various themes are presented as follows: The formal structure of the movement begins with a statement of the first subject from bar 1; then follows the second subject statement from bar 32; the development begins at bar 72; recapitulation of the second subject at bar 102 and the recapitulation of the first subject at bar 120.

The seemingly conservative and possibly regressive exterior mentioned earlier looks quite different and extraordinary from inside this work. As with the recapitulation from the third movement in E flat (a tone above the exposition on C sharp) at bar 200 in op.11



no.4, and the recapitulation in the third movement of op.25 no.4 at bar 104 of the second subject (a tone above the initial entry of this subject (A) in the exposition section) the first movement of the 1939 sonata also boasts this same technique. The recapitulation (bar 97), like in the third movement of op.25 no.4 begins with the second subject, instead of the first, a tone higher than the initial entry of this subject from bar 32 in the exposition on F sharp. This is a semitone higher than the original pitch of the first subject from the beginning of the movement. The recapitulation of the first subject takes place at bar 115, after that of the second, but not in the original tonal centre of F, but in B flat.

The key successions in this movement reflect Hindemith's awareness and preferences for symmetrically balanced groups of keys as well as symmetrical interval patterns. In *A Composer's World*, he wrote that the successions of tonalities in a piece form a sort of 'background melody' (though he doubts it can be heard) (as quoted by Neumeyer 1986: 212). These preferences became even stronger and more obvious in the 1940's. Although, a symmetrical interval pattern between keys is not present in this movement, a symmetrically balanced group of keys most certainly is: 3-1-3. Without fail, every single change in tonal centre coincides with a new section as well as a different performance direction. The main centre of C (development) is surrounded on either side by three keys.

This is illustrated in the following table.

| Performance direction | <i>Breit, mit Kraft</i> | <i>Ruhig</i> | <i>Sehr energisch</i> | <i>Ruhig, aber immer fließend</i> | <i>Breit</i> | <i>Lebhaft</i> | <i>Ein wenig breiter</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Key                   | F                       | E            | C sharp               | C                                 | F sharp      | B flat         | F                        |
| Bars                  | 1-28                    | 29-52        | 53-66                 | 67-96                             | 97-114       | 115-176        | 177-193                  |
| Material              | A                       | B            | C                     | D                                 | B            | A              | C                        |

This scheme is also seen in the second organ sonata (1937). In Hindemith's sketches for this work he marked the tonal scheme as: ech/as/afe. Like in the 1939 sonata for viola and piano, this can be correlated with all the main divisions in the published score. Unlike the 1939 viola/piano work, this movement from the organ sonata is symmetrical with both groups of keys, as well as interval patterns between these keys. The table provided below should clarify this.

|          |      |       |       |        |        |         |         |
|----------|------|-------|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Key      | E    | C     | B     | A flat | A      | F       | E       |
| Bars     | 1-31 | 32-49 | 49-71 | 72-98  | 99-125 | 126-153 | 154-184 |
| Material | A    | B     | A     | A      | A      | A       | B       |

Another example indicating Hindemith's awareness of his tonal designs is found in the trombone sonata (1941). This sketch appears after all the sketches for movements I-III, but before any sketches for movement IV. It also suggests that the work was originally intended to have only three movements, with the *Lied des Raufbolds* as the finale. Movements I-II form a complete unit – I is not tonally closed, II is closed but in D, and



III mirrors I, beginning on the dominant, ending on the tonic. These movements form a strong tonal cycle (Neumeyer 1986: 213).

This next example shows the tonal-formal scheme for this trombone sonata from Hindemith's sketchbook.

**Ex.40**



The character of the first subject in the 1939 viola/piano work is taut, rhythmically regimented and filled with octaves, fifths and fourths in both the viola and piano, suggesting an obvious theoretical presence from *The Craft of Musical Composition*. For example, the first interval is an octave in the piano left hand and a descending fourth in the viola. The opening statements of the first subject at bar 1 and 11 announced two octaves higher by the viola in the latter entry is contrapuntal with increasingly complex counter-subject lines ensuing in the piano. The overall impression is turgid, defiant and powerfully energetic. The tightness of the rhythm is emphasised by the double-dotted and quick value notes placed at the end of beats. The metronome marking, as mentioned earlier, is crotchet = 92.

**Ex.41 bars 1-4, Entry 1 of first subject**

Breit. Mit Kraft. (♩ etwa 92)

*f*

**Ex.42 bars 10-13, Entry 2 of first subject**

*f*

The melody and bass degree-progressions and harmonic fluctuation, mentioned in context of *The Craft of Musical Composition* are far more complex than in either of the two earlier sonatas. The melody degree-progression is chromatically centred, while the bass degree-progression consists of larger intervals. The harmonic fluctuation is extremely varied in this movement, consisting of a number of weak and complex chords according to the scale of Chord-groups. This example is a harmonic analysis of the first four bars of the movement according to *The Craft of Musical Composition Volume 1*.



Ex.43

Breit. Mit Kraft. (etwa 92)

The score is divided into two main sections: a piano introduction and a guitar section labeled 'A'.

**Piano Introduction:**

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The melody includes notes with slurs and accents. Above the staff, the letters 'N', 'W', 'W', and 'D' are written under specific notes.
- Staff 2 (Bass Clef):** Also starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It features a series of chords and moving lines.

**Guitar Section 'A':**

- Staff 3 (Guitar):** Marked with a circled 'A' and a '1.'. It shows a sequence of chords and melodic fragments with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals).
- Staff 4 (Guitar):** Marked with a '2.'. It continues the sequence with more complex chordal textures.
- Staff 5 (Guitar):** Marked with a circled 'B' and a '3.'. It features a series of chords with specific fingerings indicated below the staff.
- Staff 6 (Guitar):** Marked with a '4.'. It continues the sequence with more complex chordal textures.
- Staff 7 (Guitar):** Marked with a '5.'. It shows a series of chords with specific fingerings indicated below the staff.
- Staff 8 (Guitar):** Marked with a '6.'. It shows a series of chords with specific fingerings indicated below the staff.

The piano repeats the beginning of the subject as set out by the viola in bar 1 from bar 16 onwards, and then develops it in an ascending sequence of minor thirds from bars 18-20. Hindemith continues the developmental material in a repetitive question and answer fashion between the two instruments with a torrent of descending semiquavers in the viola (bar 22-3), followed directly afterwards by the piano in octaves at the same pitch (bar 23-4). This is continued with a similar phrase again begun by the viola (bar 25), this time different intervals and pitches, but yet again repeated by the piano with the viola joining in with dotted rhythms through a *crescendo* to *f* (bar 28). The passage draws to a peaceful close, providing for a smooth transition to the second subject by means of the ascending crotchets on D and D sharp, leading to E at bar 31. The example on the following page shows these ideas moving through this section.



Ex.44 bars 22-31, leading into the second subject

2

*f* *mf* *mp* *p*

*mf* *p* *mp*

*cresc.* *f*

*cresc.* *f*

TRANSITION TO SECOND SUBJECT →

*mf*

*dim.* *p*

The second subject marked *Ruhig* is freer and flowing in character, although elements from the first subject are still present. For example, the use of the two demisemiquavers in addition to the descending fourths throughout reminds one subtly of the thematic relationship with the first subject. The second subject is presented in the recapitulation at the same distance above the first subject as it was presented below that subject in the exposition. Even when it is not possible to think of tonalities in the 'diatonic' sense, the importance of the central tonality is recognised by the interval of transposition in relation

to what can be called the 'polarity' of the first subject. As mentioned previously, Hindemith also used similar tonal relations as a feature of his sonatas for other instruments, including the sonata for flute and piano (1936), sonata for violin and piano (1935) and sonata for oboe and piano (1938).

**Ex.45 bars 32-35, First entry of second subject on E.**

4 3 *Ruhig*  
*p*  
*pp*  
*mf*

**Ex.46 bars 102-105, Second entry of second subject on F sharp.**

*Breit*  
*p*  
*pp*  
*f*

The second subject is also interrupted by a transition passage not completely dissimilar to the one separating the first and second subjects discussed in the previous section (bars 56-71). This passage is more obviously segregated by a quaver rest and a new performance direction, *Sehr energisch*. This section is, like its predecessor, a reiteration of material between the two instruments at the same pitch, this time beginning with the first statement played twice in the piano followed by the viola with a different rhythmic composition. Instead of the tied semiquaver at the end of each crotchet beat the viola



starts in the same way as the previous two piano entries with an accent *ff* tied to a quaver C sharp but moves onwards with continuous semiquavers, therefore squeezing the original version of the idea into half the space. There is also a change of pitch in the viola towards the end of the statement. Hindemith first uses the viola to sweep into the tumultuous demisemiquavers that brings the statement to a close, above a piano pedal C (bars 61-62). This is quite different harmonically to the viola octave A's held while the piano performs the same idea at another pitch at the end of the next statement (bars 64-65). Eventually, this transition ends on C in bar 72 by means of the upper leading note C sharp in bar 71, in preparation for the *fugato* beginning in bar 72.

**Ex.47 bars 55-60, start of *Sehr energisch* section discussed in previous paragraph.**

**Sehr energisch**

The musical score for Ex.47, bars 55-60, is titled "Sehr energisch". It is a piano part consisting of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble staff and a bass staff. The bottom system also has a treble staff and a bass staff. The music is characterized by rapid semiquaver and demisemiquaver patterns. Dynamics include piano (p), fortissimo (ff), and forte (f). A box with the number 6 is placed above the piano part in the second system.

The development section marked *ruhig, aber immer fliessend* from bar 72 is a *fugato* at a distance of three bars at the outset. The first entry is announced by the piano starting on a G at bar 72. It begins with a dominant-tonic upbeat reminiscent of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century fugue subjects. The material in this new section consists of ideas from the *Sehr energisch* passage and the second subject, as well as extensive use of fifths and fourths. The second entry three bars later is in the shape of a real answer a fourth below the subject. After a short codetta the third entry by the viola at bar 80 returns to the tonal centre of C again. From bar 87 the entries of the subject follow one another on chromatically ascending steps at a distance of two bars starting on a G sharp in the viola, an A in the right hand of the piano two bars later, an A sharp again two bars later in the viola, on B three bars later in the left hand of the piano, again the left hand of the piano on C, and then finally in the left hand of the piano on C sharp moving directly into the recapitulation of the second subject at bar 102. As discussed earlier in the section, the second subject appears in the recapitulation a tone higher than the first entry of this material in the exposition. It appears as if Hindemith has attempted to encapsulate the mood of the first subject within the material of the second subject (bar 102), almost giving a false impression of a proper recapitulation with the wrong material. The dynamic marking is *f* instead of *p*, the performance direction is *Breit* instead of the previous *Ruhig*, and the piano writing is block-like, not dissimilar to the style of the first subject entry at the start of the movement.



Ex.48 bars 72-89, *fugato* section

7

*ruhig, aber immer fließend*

The musical score for Ex.48, bars 72-89, is a fugato section. It begins with a piano introduction in B-flat major, marked *ruhig, aber immer fließend*. The score is written for piano and includes a fugato section starting at bar 8. The music is in 3/2 time and features a variety of dynamic markings, including *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *mp*. The fugato section is characterized by a second appearance of the first subject, centered on B-flat, with a time signature of 3/2. The feeling of this theme is altogether different, with more of an

The second appearance of the first subject is centred on B flat, but this time with the time signature of 3/2. The feeling of this theme is altogether different, with more of an

agitated lilt in triplets without the blunt-edged character of the first statement with the double-dotted rhythms.

**Ex.49 bars120-123, first subject entry in recapitulation**

Lebhaft (d. bis 132)



This is followed by a Coda-like section in bar 182, clearly based on the *Sehr energisch* section from earlier in the movement, although rhythmically augmented in a similar fashion to the first subject in its second appearance.

Table of overall structure of first movement, *Breit. Mit Kraft.*

| SECTION        | LENGTH  | KEYS     | BARS    |
|----------------|---------|----------|---------|
| EXPOSITION     | 71 bars | F        | 1-71    |
| DEVELOPMENT    | 30 bars | C        | 72-101  |
| RECAPITULATION | 96 bars | B flat/F | 102-198 |

The second movement marked *Sehr lebhaft* is a Scherzo-type movement and is centred on B flat. This movement is constructed around a ternary type structure, consisting of three main sections and a Coda. Scherzo movements are traditionally in triple time, making this movement in 2/2 rather unusual. Until bar 87 it is all consistently in 2/2, but



in the development section from 88-209 there are fluctuations in time signature from 1/2, 2/2, 5/4 to 3/4. The recapitulation section is in 2/2, with the exception of bars 234, 279 and 280 (3/2).

Tonal and formal structure of second movement.

| SECTION | LENGTH   | KEYS          | BARS    |
|---------|----------|---------------|---------|
| A       | 86 bars  | B flat        | 1-86    |
| B       | 120 bars | B/A/B         | 87-209  |
| A       | 72 bars  | B flat        | 210-253 |
| CODA    | 28 bars  | E flat/B flat | 254-281 |

The first idea begins on B flat at bar 1 in the piano, and C (upper leading tone) at bar 22 in the viola. A second idea begins at bar 9 in the viola, ending on a cadence on F at bar 29. The idea is taken over by the piano as from bar 30 on and treated imitatively. The tonic/dominant relationship in the first four entries of the exposition is significant. This seems to be in line with ideas expressed in Hindemith's *Craft of Musical Composition*, where, according to Series 2, the fifth is the best 'interval'. The remainder of the section is taken up by a development of the first idea.

Ex.50 bars 1-21, Two ideas in A section, bars 1 and 9 respectively

II

Sehr lebhaft (d etwa 144)

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time, marked 'Sehr lebhaft (d etwa 144)'. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble and bass staff. The first staff has a handwritten 'IDEA 1' above it. The second system continues the first idea, with a handwritten 'IDEA 2' above it. The third system shows a change in dynamics to 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The fourth system shows a change in dynamics to 'f' (forte). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The B section is clearly centred on B. Although elements from both ideas in the A section might still seem to be present, this section is based essentially on new subject



matter. The first entry is in the viola at bar 88, followed by the piano in bar 92 at the same pitch. At bar 98, after the two aforementioned entries of the theme, a counter-theme is presented by the viola comprising elements of the lyrical idea from the A section, with a driving rhythm underneath in the piano. The roles are duly reversed at bar 105 with the viola taking over the chromatically descending sequence and the piano presenting another modified version of the motto from the start of the B section.

**Ex.51 bars 87-96, B section theme entries in viola and piano**

The musical score for Ex.51, bars 87-96, is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 87-96, and the second system covers bars 97-106. The score is written for viola and piano. The viola part is in the upper staff, and the piano part is in the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (p for piano). A box labeled '24' is present at the start of the second system, indicating a measure rest or a specific bar number.

A conversational episode ensues from the end of bar 111 with the piano introducing elements of the lyrical idea from bar 98 interrupted by the rapidly moving quaver sequence in the viola, rising by a semitone in each entry. The viola finally returns to the original B theme at the original pitch accompanied by rapidly moving quavers at an interval of a sixth apart in the piano from bar 118-123. This section ends with a cadence on A in bar 124.

**Ex.52, bars 117-121**



The piano launches into an extrovert solo (bar 122), which is quite unique in the viola sonatas. It combines elements from the lyrical ideas of the A section with repetitive and driving rhythmic interjections.

**Ex.53, bars 122-126**



It is interesting to note how much use Hindemith makes of parallel fourths, especially in the left hand of the piano from bar 132-137.



Ex.54 bars 133-137

The viola joins in again at bar 149 with the same material from bar 122, and at the same pitch.

Ex.55, bars 149-153

Much of the previous solo piano passage follows this time with the viola presenting the main thematic material and the piano in an accompanying role from bar 149-176, where the return of the material from the start of the B section appears, at the original pitch. Both of these sections are each 28 bars in length. Although each moves through different tonal centres, they both begin in A, although the piano section ends in A, while the viola comes to a close in E flat (bar 176). The following final 32 bars of the B section are a

more insistent reminder of the original material beginning in the piano. The section ends with a rhythmically augmented version of the original B theme starting at bar 195-209, ending in the tonal centre of B, as at the outset. Structurally and harmonically this extensive B section is tightly knitted together and unified thematically, rhythmically and harmonically.

**Ex.56 bars 204-209, last few bars of rhythmically augmented B section theme**



The A section returns at bar 210, this time in *pp* in the piano and a semitone removed from the fifth of the previous triad. The fragmented form, with only short statements of parts of the two themes interrupting one another, suggest that bars 210-236 serve as a preparation for the actual recapitulation of the A section at bar 237. The theme here is anchored more clearly on the tonal centre of B flat than at the beginning of the movement. The entries continually build until the launch into the Coda at bar 254, a frenzied and agitated section containing material from both A and B sections. The movement closes with a rhythmically augmented version of the rhythmic motive from A at the original pitch, again in a similar vein to the structure of the end of the B section.



The third movement is marked *Phantasie – Sehr langsam, frei* and should be performed with very little break into the fourth, *Finale (mit zwei Variationen)*. *Phantasie* was the term adopted in the Renaissance for an instrumental composition ‘whose form and invention spring solely from the fantasy and skill of the author who created it’ (Field 1998: 380). The start of this movement is certainly the most free and randomly created passage in this sonata, and is skilfully positioned within the whole. After a rigid first and intellectually rousing second, the opening to the third movement is pensive, almost open-ended.

The main theme of the movement, although not in its entirety, is introduced alternately by the piano and viola from bars 1-7.

Ex.57 bars 1-15, *Phantasie*

III  
Phantasie

Sehr langsam, frei (♩ etwa 40)

Vorangehen

wieder beruhigen

The viola follows with a rapidly arpeggiated passage leading into the first full statement of the theme at bar 19, where the viola is accompanied by *pp* semiquaver sextuplets in the piano. The roles are reversed at bar 26 where the piano has the theme (at the same pitch), accompanied by the viola with the same *pp* semiquaver



triplets. Subsequent entries of the theme follow on chromatically ascending steps: A (bars 19 and 26), A sharp (bar 29), B (31) and B sharp (33). The climax of the first sections builds to the *ff* in the piano at bar 32.

Section B begins at bar 33, marked *immer beschleunigen* in the viola. Bars 33-34 are a transition to bar 35, marked *Schnell* (crotchet=120). In contrast to Section A, Section B is contrapuntal, *ff* and extremely fast. Although used with different rhythm and pitch, the main theme of the movement is evident throughout this passage. The quick tempo gradually decreases until it reaches bar 53, marked *Sehr langsam frei*.

**Ex.58 bars 31-38, transition from A to B section**

The musical score for bars 31-38 shows a transition from section A to section B. The piano part begins with a forte (f) dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes. The violin part also begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The tempo is marked 'Bewegt' and 'immer beschleunigen'. The score concludes with a measure marked '45'.

The theme is now recapitulated beginning on E, i.e. on the same tonal centre as the beginning. The piano part here is based on a sustained low E up to bar 57.

Ex.59 bars 53-55



The last three or four bars prepare for the immediate follow-on of the *Finale* on F. The viola motive of bar 3 is heard here in the piano part in bars 55 and 59, i.e. in a reversal of roles compared to the beginning of the movement.

The harmonic content of the third movement from bars 1-25 is sparse due again to Hindemith's use of 'intervals' rather than 'chords', reminiscent of the second, as well as the two outer movements of op.25 no.4. There is a pedal point on F in the left hand of the piano from bar 8-14 under arpeggiated chords in the viola part. The harmonic texture for the rest of the movement is dense.

The thematic material of the movement is based on the outline of a-g-c sharp-b (7<sup>th</sup>-diminished 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>) with an underlying sequential construction. This sequential construction can be seen in the table on the following page. A descending stepwise motion after the first 7<sup>th</sup> leap leading into the second is also apparent in Ex.60.



Ex.60 bars 19-21, the content of thematic material as well as start notes of all the entries of the theme throughout the movement. Progression of tonality is clear in this table.

| BAR NUMBER | INSTRUMENT | STARTING NOTE |
|------------|------------|---------------|
| 1          | PIANO      | E             |
| 2          | VIOLA      | A             |
| 6          | PIANO      | E             |
| 19         | VIOLA      | A             |
| 26         | PIANO      | A             |
| 29         | PIANO      | A SHARP       |
| 31         | PIANO      | B             |
| 35         | PIANO      | F             |
| 38         | VIOLA      | C             |
| 44         | PIANO      | D             |
| 45         | VIOLA      | F             |
| 47         | VIOLA      | B             |

The first five entries (as seen in the table on the previous page) are conventional, beginning on E-A-E-A-A (bars 1, 2, 6, 19, and 26) showing a strong tonic-subdominant relationship. There is also a strong dominant pull from the first (bar 1) to the last entry (bar 47) on E and B respectively. The outer core of this sequential construction is tonal and well balanced at the beginning and end, although with an unresolved feeling ending on the dominant. This is perhaps not extremely significant as this movement is *attaca* into the fourth, and was probably not intended to be closed tonally. Internally, there are some less conventional structures appearing. For example, the relationship between the B-F in bars 31 and 35 is reversed in bars 45-47 to F-B. The appearance of the tritone draws attention to Hindemith's lengthy section on this interval and chords built on it from his *Craft of Musical Composition* (pg.79-84), as well as shedding light on how he absorbed this into his own compositional style.

Structure of the third movement, *Phantasie – Sehr langsam, frei*

| SECTION | LENGTH  | KEYS | BARS  |
|---------|---------|------|-------|
| A       | 32 bars | E    | 1-32  |
| B       | 29 bars | E    | 33-60 |

The fourth movement comprises a theme and two variations marked *Finale - Leicht bewegt, Ein wenig langsamer and Sehr lebhaft*. It could not be more different to the first viola sonata, op.11 no.4 I in its variation form. The form of the early work was discussed earlier in the chapter, within its context of cyclic form. The *Finale* of the third sonata for viola and piano is not only totally different from a structural point of view, but is also placed in a different position within in the work compared to its



predecessor. Although Hindemith composed a variation movement in the op.10 no.1 string quartet as well as the cyclic/variation form in op.11 no.4, he had not used variation form in any other of his string sonatas in the 1920's or 1930's. It is by far the most substantial duo sonata for a string instrument and piano that Hindemith had composed until this time. As mentioned previously, the main tonal centre of the fourth movement is F. The theme is in F, Variation I in B and Variation II returning to F to end off the work.

The nature of the theme is not dissimilar to the character of the first subject from the first movement. The use of dotted rhythms, demisemiquaver appoggiatura notes, even at a forward moving, but steady crotchet = 96 tempo, gives a feeling of anticipation. It is clear from Hindemith's consistent use of F as the starting note for each entry of the theme that he was attempting to unify and clearly establish the characteristics of the theme melody. The harmonic fluctuation of the theme is stable and contains mostly 'strong' chords, according to Hindemith's table of chord-groups from *The Craft of Musical Composition Volume 1*.

writing, according to *The Craft of Musical Composition*

Leicht bewegt (♩ etwa 96)

mf

mp

p

3.

4.

5.

p

mp

p

3.

4.

5.

p

The theme section is divided into three main sections with clear tonal centres: A in tonal centre of F (bars 1-18), B in tonal centre of D (bars 19-50) and A in tonal centre of F (bars 51-74). There are four entries of the theme in this 74 bar section, all



beginning on F. They are at bar 1 (viola), bar 13 (piano), bar 15 (viola) and bar 51 (piano).

A feeling of anticipation in the B section is created with the use of *ricochet* bowing in the viola on the demisemiquaver upbeats, making it closer to matching the rapid detached speed of the demisemiquavers attained by the piano from bar 19-50. The B section comprises material from the A section, as well as some hints at the mood and character to come in Variation I from bar 75 onwards.

Variation I is ingeniously crafted and almost the most creative section in the entire work. The choice of B as the tonal centre in Variation I is unusual as B is the 'tritone' relation to the main tonal centre of F in this work. Hindemith's consistent use of F as the starting note for each entry of the theme indicates that he was attempting to unify and clearly establish the characteristics of the theme melody. Variation I is an unexpected, chromatic and intricate development of a fairly simple theme, transformed into a display of extremely complex chromatics acrobatic for both instruments. The variation consists of sections with little vertical harmonic content, as much of the thematic material is imitative, with the viola starting the theme alternating between rapidly moving arpeggiated passages in the piano. Hindemith has stated the theme in Variation I with exactly the same intervals as in the original theme section (bars 1-74), but at a different pitch, and using alternative rhythm and harmonic structure.

Example 62 shows the notes of the Theme and below the version of the theme in Variation 1.

The musical score for Example 62 consists of two parts. The top part is the 'Theme', a single melodic line in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The bottom part is 'Variation 1', a piano introduction. It begins with the tempo marking 'Ein wenig langsamer (♩ 84)' and the dynamic 'pp'. The piano part features dense harmonic textures, with the left hand playing a series of chords and the right hand playing a more active melody. The variation ends on a *pp* B major chord at bar 148. The page number 90 is visible at the bottom right of the score.

The only passages with a strongly vertical harmonic content are bars 102-106, 113-116 and 143-148. The rest of the variation consists of ‘intervals’ rather than ‘chords’. The variation ends on a *pp* B major chord at bar 148. This final chord is a peaceful harmonic resolution to the variation.

Thematically, tonally and rhythmically Variation II is strongly linked to the rest of the work. The tonal centre of Variation II is F, the original tonal centre of the theme. The piano introduces the first ten notes of the theme from bars 149-152, densely harmonised and with a different rhythm from the original. The viola follows



immediately with the remainder of the theme from bars 152-167, accompanied by the piano with related contrapuntal material. Both the Theme and Variation I are in 3/4, but Variation II is in 2/2. This change from triple to duple meter automatically gives a different quality to the theme.

Hindemith makes use of octaves throughout this variation to strengthen and reinforce the harmony. This use of octaves again gives rise to the existence of ‘intervals’ rather than ‘chords’. Hindemith’s fascination with fourths and fifths is also illustrated throughout this variation. There are a number of passages containing consecutive fifths and fourths.

The structure of the complete *Finale (mit Zwei Variationen)* looks as follows.

| SECTION      | LENGTH  | TONAL CENTRE | BARS    |
|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| THEME        | 74 bars | F            | 1-74    |
| VARIATION I  | 74 bars | B            | 75-148  |
| VARIATION II | 98 bars | F            | 149-246 |

## **CONCLUSION**

This dissertation has provided an overview of Hindemith's life between 1919-1939 with reference to the three sonatas for viola and piano. The study began by drawing the reader into Hindemith's realm as a viola player and composer, therefore assuring awareness of the composer's intimate knowledge of the instrument and its possibilities and limitations. The work developed in concentric circles, moving from a discussion of Hindemith's life during this period in chapter 1 as well as an account of the circumstances surrounding the origin and reasons for the composition of each work, to focusing on their place in Hindemith's life and that of the viola repertoire in chapter 2, therefore moving closer and closer to the works themselves throughout the dissertation.

After exploring all the possible channels available to obtain information on these sonatas it became obvious that there was nothing of any detail. Having performed these works frequently, as well as having written and researched about them for an extensive period of time I have come to the conclusion that these three sonatas have been greatly underestimated. This would apply to op.25 no.4 and the sonata composed in 1939 more so than op.11 no.4, probably because of their difficulty and less approachable musical idiom. Op.25 no.4 was composed in close proximity to Hindemith's two other successful sonatas for viola, op.11 no.4 and op.25 no.1, and if it had been published at the same time as the others it may well have encroached upon the success of these works, both of which are played far more frequently than op.25 no.4. The sonata of 1939 was composed during a time of dissension and conflict in his life, shortly after his move to Switzerland and just a few months before immigrating to the United States in 1940. The changes in his situation are prevalent



in the style, complexity, harshness and obtuseness of much of the music in this sonata. All three sonatas are written beautifully for the viola, in a way that only an outstanding viola player could truly have been able to realise. Hindemith was also an accomplished pianist, and his intimate knowledge of the instrument serves to enhance the success of these works as duo sonatas.

I hope that this dissertation will serve to encourage and motivate other viola players to perform these valuable and unique sonatas.

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